DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 394 410 HE 029 104

AUTHOR Wolfson, Gloria Krupnick
TITLE Prior Learning Assessment: A Case Study of Acceptance of Innovation and Change.
PUB DATE Mar 96
NOTE 281p.; A major applied research project, Nova Southeastern University.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Dissertations/Theses - Undetermined (040)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC12 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Students; Change Strategies; College Credits; Educational Change; *Education Work Relationship; Equivalency Tests; Experiential Learning; Higher Education; Nontraditional Students; *Prior Learning; Resistance to Change; School Business Relationship; Student Placement; Transfer Policy; *Work Experience Programs
IDENTIFIERS *University College of the Fraser Valley BC

ABSTRACT

This project investigated the acceptance of innovation and change as it related to a specific education change of prior learning assessment (PLA) at the University College of the Fraser Valley (UCFV) in British Columbia, Canada. The study explored the barriers that existed against students who wanted to have experiential and workplace learning recognized towards a credential at UCFV. Content analysis of all internal and provincial documents relating to PLA were used to identify a series of issues and concerns that were explored both quantitatively and qualitatively. A survey of all UCFV faculty and administration explored attitudes toward and actual experiences with prior learning assessment. In-depth focus interviews were conducted with those who attempted to gain recognition for prior learning. Use of case study and triangulation presented a more complete description of the situation and a more thorough understanding of the forces acting to both inhibit and promote change. Integration of content analysis, survey research, and in-depth interviews served as a basis for a set of recommendations to UCFV that should increase acceptability and use of PLA. Recommendations include the creation of an Office of Prior Learning at the college; incorporation of PLA in base budget funding; and resolution of the issues of transcription, portfolio grading, and transferability of PLA credit. (Contains over 200 references.) (Author/NAV)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

HE

ED 394 410

PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT: A CASE STUDY OF ACCEPTANCE OF INNOVATION AND CHANGE

Gloria Krupnick Wolfson

A major applied research project presented to Programs for
Higher Education in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Nova Southeastern University

March, 1996

HE029 104

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND
DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL
HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Gloria Krupnick Wolfson

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality

- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank my MARP advisor, Dr. Kenneth E. Varcoe, for his unwavering support and encouragement as I struggled through a very complex process. His insight, clarity, and constant feedback were invaluable. I would also very much like to thank the other members of my committee, Dr. Linda Lopez and Dr. Anne Mulder. Dr. Mulder, especially, has become my friend and confidante, and has encouraged me to not lose my sense of humour as I struggle through the process.

Linda Brown, my former student, next door neighbour, confidante, and editor, I couldn't have done this without your constant support and help. My thanks also to very supportive colleagues Adrienne Chan, Georgina Marshall, Doyle Clifton, Kelly Maier, Susan Witter, Debi Block, and Chelene Koenig. I couldn't have done this project without your constant help and support and freeing me up from more mundane duties in order to pursue the research. My thanks also to my students in Social Work 404 (Research Methods), Melanie Scott, Connie Epp, Karen de ste Croix, Karla Ramsay, and Evelyn Riley for allowing me apply my theoretical research knowledge to the teaching situation. Action research lives on.

I am thankful for having had the opportunity to be a full-time student at Nova Southeastern University during the 1994-95 academic year. The support of colleagues during this time, especially Dr. Anne Mulder, Dr. Maria Ligas, Dr. Martin Parks, Dr. Linda Schierton, Dr. Ross Moreton, Dr. Diane Paul, Dr. Stan Hannah, and Dr. Peter Mills, was invaluable. To my former

colleague and friend, Dr. Dolores Smiley, it wouldn't have been possible without you. The year in Florida was one of the best years of my life.

Finally, thank you to my children, Dr. Lara Wolfson and Daniel Wolfson who supported me through my year long sabbatical and continued to encourage me to achieve. I am also grateful to my sisters, Dr. Phyllis More and Susan Fischer and their families, for the supportive telephone calls and constant encouragement. I am also thankful to my computer that never gave up even when I was about to.

Finally, I dedicate this MARP to my parents, Herman and Bertha Krupnick who died in 1988. Thank you for setting me on the academic path.

Abstract of a major applied research project presented to
Nova Southeastern University in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education

PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT: A CASE STUDY OF ACCEPTANCE OF INNOVATION AND CHANGE

by

Gloria Krupnick Wolfson

March, 1996

This major applied research project (MARP) investigated acceptance of innovation and change as it related to a specific educational change--prior learning assessment (PLA) at the University College of the Fraser Valley (UCFV). Change theory suggests that acceptance of innovation and change is not distributed evenly throughout social systems and that individual adaptation of innovation is related both to individual characteristics as well as the nature of the innovation itself.

PLA has not been uniformly accepted at UCFV and there are many barriers for students wanting to have experiential and workplace learning recognized towards a credential at UCFV. This MARP explored these barriers and suggests strategies for reducing these difficulties.

There are pressures on UCFV to implement a system of articulation with private postsecondary training institutions in order to grant graduates of these programs credit towards an additional credential at UCFV. One of the outcomes of this MARP

was a series of recommendations that could be useful in guiding the creation of such an articulation process.

Several research questions were posed for this project. What factors can be identified as critical for faculty acceptance of educational change? In particular, which factors are critical for the acceptance of the idea of prior learning? How is the acceptance of innovation related to the nature of the innovation itself? How can a model of diffusion of innovation explain the level of acceptance of PLA at UCFV? What recommendations can be made that will enhance the future acceptability of an articulation model for private post-secondary training institutions?

Content analysis of all internal and provincial documents relating to PLA was undertaken to identify a series of issues and concerns that were explored both qualitatively and quantitatively. A survey of all UCFV faculty and administration was conducted, which explored attitudes towards and actual experience of prior learning assessment. Indepth focused interviews were conducted with UCFV adminstration, faculty, and students who had attempted to gain recognition for prior learning.

The use of multiple techniques of investigation (case study) and multiple methods of analysis (triangulation) presents a more complete description of the situation and a more thorough understanding of the forces acting to both inhibit and promote change. The integration of content analysis, survey research, and indepth interviews of faculty and students served as the basis of a set of recommendations to UCFV that should increase the acceptability and use of PLA.

PLA is not well established at UCFV. Faculty were generally unaware of PLA policy and methodologies. There was confusion between PLA as a concept and specific methods of granting PLA credit. PLA is neither well understood nor accepted at the department level. There are real barriers for students attempting to gain PLA credit at UCFV. PLA represents a major shift in both paradigm and process and requires faculty to make major shifts in the way they conceptualize their roles and student learning.

There are strong forces supporting change at UCFV including the high level of collegiality of faculty, the high level of administrative support perceived by faculty, faculty willingness to change and adapt, the well established transfer and articulation network within the province, and the high level of faculty commitment to students. There is support for articulation of private training with UCFV and this needs to be exploited.

Recommendations include the creation of an Office of Prior Learning, incorporating PLA in base budget funding, and resolution of the outstanding issues of transcription, portfolio grading, and transferability of PLA credit. Greater use of course challenge mechanisms should be encouraged.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF TABLES 11

Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION 13

Nature of the Problem 15

Purpose of the Project 16

Background and Significance of the Problem 16

Transfer, Articulation, and the Private Postsecondary System 18

PLA: History and Current Situation 22

PLA Assessment Methods 24

Change, Innovation, and Resistance 27

Research Questions 29

Definitions of Terms 29

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE 38

Introduction 38

Innovation, Change, and Resistance 39

Acceptability of Innovation 39

Individual Adoption of Innovation 42

Organizational Change and Innovation 45

Innovation, Change, Resistance and Higher Education 46

Collegiate Culture and Adaptation to Change 50

Changing Patterns in the Delivery of Higher Education 53

Nontraditional Students and Higher Education 54

Innovation and Technology in Higher Education 58

Prior Learning Assessment as Innovation 60

Methods of Assessment 61

PLA in Canada 65

Barriers and Resistance to Implementing PLA 68

Strategies for Managing Innovation 73

Summary 77

3. METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES 78

Methodologies 77

Case Studies 78

Triangulation 81

Survey Research 81

Qualitative Methods 83

Action Research 84

Interviews 85

Procedures 87

Introduction 87

Factors Critical for Acceptance of Change 87

Development of an Articulation Process 94

Assumptions 96

Limitations 97

4. RESULTS 101

Introduction 101

Information Gathering 103

Content Analysis of Documents 104

Current PLA Practices 108

The UCFV PLA Survey 113

Development of the Survey 114

Development and Validation of the Survey 116

Administration of the Survey 119

Comparison of Respondent and Population Parameters 120

Survey Responses 124

Relationship between Innovation and Acceptance of PLA 148

Faculty and Administration Interviews 149

Results of Faculty Interviews 151

Student Interviews 166

Findings of the Research Phase 171

Development of an Articulation Process 192

Description of Current PLA Practices 192

Force Field Analysis 194

Preparation of the Report 202

Recommendations of the Report 203

5. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS 206

Discussion 206

Survey Results 207

Discussion of Limitations 208

Data Inconsistencies and Paradoxes 209

The Research Questions 211

Conclusions 226

Support for Principle Not Practice 228

Resistance and Barriers 229
Educational Reform 231
Models of Diffusion 232
Implementation of the Report 232
Implications 233
Recommendations 236
Recommendations for Implementation 239
Recommendations for Dissemination 239
Recommendations for Further Research 240
BIBLIOGRAPHY 242
APPENDIXES 260
A. UCFV Prior Learning Assessment Policy (1993) 261
B. UCFV Prior Learning Assessment Policy (1995) 263
C. Characteristics of Adult Learners 266
D. Survey Instrument 267
E. Letters Accompanying Survey 271
F. Document and Meeting Summaries 273
G. Additional Survey Data 280
H. Comments from Survey 283
I. Interview Guides 287
J. A Suggested Articulation Process for Private Postsecondary Institutions 290
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH 318

LIST OF TABLES

Table Page

1. Issues Identified Through Content Analysis 107
2. Gender Comparison of Respondents and Non Respondents 121
3. UCFV Employment Status 122
4. UCFV Faculty/Administration Area Affiliation 123
5. Respondents--Age Category Distribution 125
6. Respondents--Years Employed Category Distribution 126
7. Respondent Level of Education 127
8. Survey Response by Functional Area 129
9. Previous Utilization of PLA Methodologies in own Education 130
10. Number of PLA Methodologies Utilized in own Education 131
11. Exposure to PLA Concepts and Methodologies 132
12. Perceived Level of Departmental Involvement in PLA 133
13. Personal Involvement in Granting PLA Credit 135
14. Ability to Identify PLA Opinion Leaders 136
15. Identification of PLA Opinion Leaders 137

16. Awareness, Knowledge, and Level of Support for PLA 139
17. Means of Awareness, Knowledge, and Level of Support for PLA by UCFV Area 140
18. Linkage of PLA Credit to Length of Program 144
19. Beliefs about Suitability of PLA by Course/Program Level 145
20. Beliefs about Suitability of PLA for Types of Courses/Programs/Disciplines 146
21. Willingness to Grant PLA Credit for Courses Taught by Respondent 147

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Fraser Valley College was established in 1974, as a comprehensive community college, in a semi-rural area about 60 miles from Vancouver. In 1991, the college name was changed to University College of the Fraser Valley (UCFV), reflecting the change in mission to include the granting of baccalaureate degrees. UCFV is now a degree granting institution, with a catchment area of approximately 160,000 people in a traditionally rural community which is becoming rapidly urbanized.

The mission of UCFV is to "provide adult learners and the communities of the region with leadership in the delivery of education, training, and related services needed to learn, live, and work successfully in a rapidly changing world" (1994 UCFV Calendar). Because of a mission statement emphasizing "leadership in the delivery of education," UCFV is allowed a degree of flexibility that can be maximized in accrediting learning achieved elsewhere.

UCFV received university college status in July, 1991 after community action brought the issue of access to baccalaureate degrees to the forefront. Degrees are offered in Arts and Science with extended minors (rather than majors), and several applied areas including: Child and Youth Care, Criminal Justice, Business Administration, Computer Information Systems, Adult Education, and Social Work. Additional degrees, including Nursing and Aviation, were to be implemented in 1994-95. These programs, while developed, were not offered due to financial constraints. In developing four year degrees, UCFV has been cognizant of the need to retain a balance between traditional arts and sciences degrees and career technical degrees.

From 1991 through 1995, all baccalaureate degrees were offered in collaboration with an existing British Columbia university as UCFV and the other university colleges in the province (there are now six) were not initially given the authority to grant their own degrees. With the passing of Bill 22 in the fall of 1994, the university colleges are now authorized to grant their own degrees and the collaborative agreements with other universities will run their course in the next few years. The change of status to a university college has meant very rapid growth for UCFV and a very large increase in the number of students seeking to attend community college programs designed to interface with baccalaureate degree programs.

A total of 432 full time individuals were employed by UCFV during the 1994-95 academic years, with an additional 300 instructors and 300 staff employed on a casual or part-time basis. Of the 432 full time employees, 236 are faculty, 184 are classified as support staff, and 12 are management. Included in the faculty component are counsellors and librarians, as well as all department heads and directors. The faculty component has grown since 1991 by about 25 full time positions each year, while staff and administrative positions have remained relatively constant.

In 1993, UCFV initiated planning to offer a degree program in Adult Education. The plans for this program included a component where students could earn up to 30 of the 120 credits required for graduation through prior learning assessment (PLA). This necessitated the creation of a policy on prior learning assessment (see Appendix A). The PLA policy is currently under revision (see Appendix B) as the original policy was found to be too restrictive. Concurrent with this development, the province expressed an interest in the creation of a provincial program in prior learning assessment.

Students entering the degree in Adult Education in the fall of 1994 were informed that they might be able to get PLA credit for some of their learning. However, PLA, which is in its infancy, has not been uniformly accepted by faculty at UCFV, and students face barriers in attempting to get their prior learning recognized.

The researcher is a full-time faculty member at UCFV and was department head of social services/social work for fifteen years. As a member of the task force planning the Adult Education degree, she participated in the development of the PLA policy. The researcher has been a member of the Provincial Task Force on Prior Learning Assessment, which developed into the Provincial PLA Facilitators Group, and continues to be a member of the PLA Working Group (an implementation committee) at UCFV.

Nature of the Problem

UCFV has been asked to create models for assessment of program equivalencies (an articulation process) for private training institutions. To prepare for implementation of a system to evaluate nonformal and non-public higher education, a greater understanding of the processes of acceptance of change and innovation is needed. Not all UCFV faculty view PLA as an appropriate tool for granting credit toward a college credential. This conflict among the faculty contributes to the barriers students face in attempting to obtain credit under the current PLA policy. While some faculty have eagerly embraced PLA, other faculty remain unconvinced and are either covertly or openly resistant to the concept.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of the study was to examine the factors that relate to acceptance of educational change, in particular the acceptance of prior learning assessment for credit at UCFV. By describing and analyzing the process of acceptance of educational change and innovation as it related to a specific educational change, the findings of this case study formed the basis of a series of recommendations that could be used to improve the future practice of PLA at UCFV. A series of recommendations, based upon the research, were developed that would guide the formation of a process of articulation of private postsecondary with public postsecondary institutions.

Background and Significance of the Problem

Adults who return to school to retrain for career changes or advancement want to have their background and prior learning recognized (see Appendix C). Adults constitute a significant portion of British Columbia's postsecondary students; at the three major institutions (University of Victoria, University of British Columbia, and Simon Fraser University) the average age of students is 27. The average age of the community college student is 31 (Morin, 1994).

The availability of funded seats in courses and programs is substantially less than the demand. This provides both philosophical and financial incentives to implement a system of PLA so that adults with significant learning will not have to take courses or programs where they already have the knowledge and skills (Tough 1991; Dennison, 1992a; Gallagher, 1992; Koenig & Wolfson, 1994; Morin, 1994).

The provincial government's interest in PLA is evident in the amount of training materials and activities that have been funded. This support resulted in several PLA projects being undertaken (including UCFV, Douglas College, and Malaspina University College). However, these demonstration programs, which have tended to be limited in scope, have not led to widespread acceptance of PLA in the province, especially within degree granting programs (Koenig & Wolfson, 1994).

There are some systems currently in place that allow students to request credit for courses where they have acquired the requisite knowledge and skills through nonformal learning. However, these systems place the responsibility for the demonstration of skill and knowledge acquisition on students requiring demonstration of learning equal to what would have taken place had they been in class and that the learning matches the objectives of the course(s) for which they are seeking credit. Challenge exams require students have familiarity with the texts for a course. Portfolio methods require students to provide elaborate documentation of the learning that has taken place and often require students to produce transcripts for the learning that has taken place in nonformal higher education (Mandell & Michelson, 1990).

Adult learning rarely has that precise a match. The literature indicates adult learning is motivated by the need to perform a job or to achieve personal goals. This learning is thus more practical than theoretical and subsequently does not match the usual college curriculum where the emphasis is on theory, only sometimes followed with application of learning (Keeton, 1976; Cross, 1981; Simosko, 1988; Lamdin, 1992).

Susan Brain, an advisor at the Open Learning Agency, tells the story of a Victoria police constable with more than twenty years on the force (and who had completed almost 100 credits of university transfer work) attempting to get PLA credit for a fourth year course in criminology at a British Columbia university. Despite the production of an extensive portfolio documenting his learning in relation to the course objectives, he was denied credit by the professor who taught the course, because he "hadn't read the textbook for the course" (S. Brain, personal communication, May 15, 1993).

Transfer, Articulation, and the Private Postsecondary System

Although there is a well-developed and provincially supported articulation system between community colleges, university colleges, and universities, private training institutions are not included in these networks. There are no processes in place that would allow the system to evaluate the training provided by private training institutions for "block" credit toward an additional credential offered by the public system. Increasingly, training is being offered through private training institutions, the military, foreign institutions, and others.

This is not to say the articulation within the public system is without difficulties. The universities are generally in control of the process and much of the education and training available at the college level in the career and vocational areas is not university transferable. An articulation system between colleges with similar programs (i.e., auto mechanics or business administration) exists which allows students to transfer accomplishments easily between institutions at the same level.

> Our several separate education and training systems need to operate as parts of a single, integrated but differentiated network. That network should have the flexibility to expand the recognition of competencies gained outside formal education, improve the integration of studies of different kinds and the work of different institutions, seek better balance of types of learning in post-secondary programs, have a system-wide approach to the transfer of credits. (Gallagher, 1992, p. ii)

Students should not have to suffer unreasonable penalties, such as course repetition or starting over when moving from levels of study in similar areas or when changing areas of study (Gallagher, 1992). There is a system of education and training that includes both public and private institutions. However, the graduates of private training institutions who want to get a credential, available only at public institutions, usually are unable to obtain credit for their work and must repeat courses and programs. Since all institutions are essentially public in their funding, this becomes a waste of taxpayers' money.

This need to repeat work generates a concern with the lack of recognition, articulation, or transfer of private postsecondary level programs with public post-secondary college programs. Susan Witter, Dean of Continuing Education at UCFV, states she has "personally met with numerous learners, many of whom are social assistance recipients, who are frustrated with their attempts to have the public postsecondary system in British Columbia recognize the credentials of the private college they attended" (S. Witter, personal communication, November 12, 1994). Numerous students who apply to UCFV and other public institutions request private college credential recognition and prior learning assessment recognition.

The Private PostSecondary Act of 1991 established a commission, separate from government, which provides for a voluntary accreditation process for all registrants. By the end of 1994, 806 institutions had been registered. The commission has two major responsibilities: to provide consumer protection with respect to all registered institutions (registration) and to ensure that institutions demonstrate educational competence (accreditation).

The creation by the federal government of local labour force development boards has increased the demand for transferability even more. Cross sector issues of the British Columbia Labour Development Board (BCLDB) include transferability, laddering, foreign credentials assessment, and articulation. The BCLDB has stated provincial funding should be granted only to pubic or private institutions who can produce the outcomes identified in the training contracts, and credentials should be recognized to enable students to ladder between institutions (Shah & Witter, 1995).

The Act is far-reaching in its intent. All institutions providing any "job-related or academic skill" must register with the Commission. The only exemptions are for (a) training offered by an employer solely for its employees, (b) conference activities, and (c) activities offered by individuals under contract to an exempt institution such as a public institution (Storey, 1995, p. 7). Institutions moving through the accreditation process expect some recognition in terms of credit transfer from the public postsecondary sector (S. Witter, personal communication, June 8, 1995).

At the beginning of 1995, there were approximately 850 private training schools registered in the province of British Columbia. More than 60,000 students were enroled in these programs with more than half in trades and technology programs. The balance of students were enroled in a broad range of business, community service, personal care, hospitality, and other programs (Shah & Witter, 1995). In the future, many of these students will seek to enrol in public institutions to continue their education and will demand a system where credit for their learning at the private institution is recognized. This creates a need for the development of systematic methods of prior learning assessment and articulation.

The premise for this project was that finding out more about the factors influencing the acceptance of PLA as an innovation would produce useful information that could be used to inform the development of an articulation model for private training institutions with the public system, and UCFV in particular. This MARP, through exploration of attitudes toward innovation and change as well as exploration of the UCFV experience with prior learning assessment, developed a series of recommendations that can guide the development of an articulation system for nonformal or nonpublic training.

Prior Learning Assessment: History and Current Situation

In order to be able to recommend future improvements in the PLA process, there is a need to examine its antecedents. PLA in itself is not a new concept, although certain elements (assessment by portfolio for example) may be newer than others. In many ways, postsecondary institutions have traditionally utilized forms of prior learning assessment through transferring of credits, challenge exams, and exemptions from prerequisites. Both the United States and United Kingdom have been the leaders in development of PLA but for different reasons.

In Canada, the impetus for prior learning assessment has not been as great as in the United Kingdom and the United States. Reasons for this are varied. Canadian institutions tend to be more conservative than their United States counterparts. More importantly, Canadian institutions have an oversupply of traditional students and are not in a competitive position for students as is the situation in the United States. The pressure for PLA in Canada has come not from the pressures of an academic marketplace in wooing students to a particular institution, but from a political need to streamline the educational process and avoid students repeating training experiences at taxpayers' expense (Fletcher, 1994; Morin, 1994).

In British Columbia, the British Columbia Council for Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT) has been a leader in promoting PLA within the province, especially in relation to the provincial articulation system. The various strategies implemented in British Columbia have included holding two province wide forums, creating standards and guidelines for the implementation of PLA, holding two training sessions for faculty assessors, the production of training manuals, and the funding of PLA pilot projects.

Given the highly autonomous nature of the British Columbia college and institute system (Dennison, 1995), the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour (MSTL) has preferred to use an approach encouraging colleges and universities to develop PLA programs rather than mandating PLA. Supplemental funding has been provided for PLA pilot programs as an addition to base funding provided each college. Each institution has been encouraged to create a PLA policy that works for the institution (S. Witter, personal communication, June 8, 1995).

Portfolio assessment has been implemented, albeit in a small way, at UCFV. Three sections of Adult Education 200/300 (AE 200) were offered in 1994-95 with only twenty out of sixty students who completed AE 200 choosing to submit portfolios. The most common reasons given for not submitting portfolios, according to the AE 200 instructor, were (a) documentation was impossible to get, (b) students felt it was too much work to do the portfolio, (c) students realized their learning did not match specific course outcomes and they would be unlikely to receive credit, (d) student learning did not have the theoretical match with the specific course, (e) the credit students were seeking was from a department not amenable to PLA, and (f) there were structural barriers to granting credit for prior learning assessment. During this period of time, approximately 20 students, recognizing the barriers facing them in getting credit for their learning and knowing that producing a portfolio was a requirement of AE 200, simply dropped the course (C. Koenig, personal communication, June 8, 1995).

While the mandate is in place, there are many issues needing to be worked out either locally or provincially. Included in these are the funding for PLA and Portfolio Development courses, and the transcripting of PLA course credits.

Prior Learning Assessment Methods

The various methods of assessing prior learning can be clustered into three main categories: exams, equivalencies, and documentation and demonstration of achievement. Some methods are more suitable than others for particular types of learning. There is some evidence there has been more faculty resistance to using some PLA assessment methods (e.g., portfolio assessment) than others. Some methods of PLA assessment, because of their similarity to the more traditional course assessment methods (e.g., challenge exams) seem to engender less resistance (Koenig & Wolfson, 1994, p. 14).

Program Equivalencies

Sometimes learners possess significant training in their field gained from employer-related training activities, continuing education courses, military-related training, and other formal activities outside of the postsecondary system but clearly representing postsecondary level learning. In these cases, it would be more appropriate to set up credit equivalencies. There are basically two types of equivalencies: program equivalencies and course equivalencies (Koenig & Wolfson, 1994, p. 15).

Program equivalencies are better known, in a traditional context, as "block credit." Evaluating a successfully completed program, professional license, or professional certificate for credit toward a credential is giving block credit for that program. Program equivalencies do not measure the individual's learning. It is the instruction delivered that is being evaluated, similar to the traditional articulation process. What differs is that the program, license, or certificate being evaluated for credit is often from a nonformal source.

Course equivalencies are better known, in a different context, as "transfer credit." Again, what is being evaluated is not the student's actual learning in a course, but the instruction delivered. The request for transfer credit could be for formal studies or nonformal learning. Especially in the case of nonformal learning, the PLA candidate bears the primary responsibility for providing details of the course content and evidence of his or her achievement in that course.

Credit by Examination

Sometimes individuals acquire significant learning from the nonformal system best demonstrated through an exam process. This is particularly true in courses highly theoretical in nature. There are basically two options for exams: challenge exams and standardized exams. Challenge exams are probably the most familiar type of PLA currently being used in British Columbia institutions. A challenge exam is not a course final, but it is usually prepared by the instructor of the course being challenged. Challenge exams, ideally, should not be text based or require a learner to have been exposed to a particular instructor at a particular time. The exam should cover a wide body of accepted knowledge or concepts in the challenged course. However, it is common practice to use a course final (which is both text and instructor based) as a challenge exam.

Standardized exams, such as the College Level Examination Program (CLEP), are recognized by most postsecondary institutions in the United States but have not received acceptance in Canada. Introductory and highly theoretical courses lend themselves well to standardized examination, especially where the body of knowledge being tested is not specifically Canadian, but is universal in theme, for example mathematics or English composition (Wolfson & Koenig, 1994, p. 115).

Portfolio Based Assessment

In many cases, neither exams nor equivalencies give learners the best opportunity to prove they know what they claim to know. In these situations, a written portfolio provides a better method for demonstrating and documenting learning. When a portfolio is supplemented with samples of achievement, this combination is known as portfolio-assisted assessment. "Portfolio assessment works best with courses that have a base in practice and in which theory is seen as a rationale for practice rather than as an end within itself" (Koenig & Wolfson, 1994, p. 25).

Portfolio assessment may not be the most suitable choice for learners who are requesting credit for highly theoretical courses, such as most university transfer courses or courses with traditional academic content (Koenig & Wolfson, 1994, p. 25). Of all of the methods of assessing PLA, portfolio methods have engendered the most resistance. Faculty do not have much experience in this kind of assessment and tend to resist what is unfamiliar.

The PLA coordinator at UCFV has documented the resistance to PLA particularly in the use of portfolio assisted assessment (C. Koenig, personal communication, June 8, 1994). One of the factors this MARP examined is the relationship between the type of PLA assessment method and faculty acceptance or resistance.

Change, Innovation, and Resistance

The process of implementing systems for PLA in both British Columbia and UCFV will require some fundamental shifts in the way faculty view themselves and the learning process. The implementation of PLA can be considered an innovation within an educational system since it requires faculty change their attitudes towards their own role and see learning from a different perspective. These kinds of shifts are difficult to make; some people make them more easily, while others tend to resist change.

Change in social systems is inevitable. However, it seldom occurs in a smooth, balanced, and unresisted manner. Consequently, the adoption of an innovation may be both time consuming and difficult. Rogers (1983) elaborates that getting a new idea accepted, even when it has obvious advantages, is often very difficult. He states the most important factors affecting the adoption of a new idea are its compatibility with existing values and beliefs of individuals and their past experience with change in the social system. While concerned primarily with the diffusion of technological adoptions, where the diffusion rate is easily seen by those who adopt the new practice, Rogers believes concepts of diffusion research are generalizable to both organizational and educational systems and are also applicable to diffusion of ideas and the change process.

Those innovations compatible with the existing values, past experience, and needs of the potential adopters will be adopted more easily. Adoption of innovations requiring alterations to an individual's value and belief system will be resisted and change will be slower.

Research Questions

1. What factors can be identified as critical for faculty acceptance of educational change? In particular, which factors are critical for the acceptance of the idea of prior learning?

2. How is the acceptance of innovation related to the nature of the innovation itself? How can a model of diffusion of innovation explain the level of acceptance of PLA at UCFV?

3. What recommendations can be made that will enhance the future acceptability of an articulation model for private postsecondary training institutions?

Definition of Terms

ACT-PEP. The American College Testing Proficiency Examination Program. Similar to CLEP exams, these exams are offered by a wide variety of colleges in the United States to offer non-formal learning equivalencies.

Adult learner. The term adult learner generally describes learners who are over eighteen years old.

Advanced placement. Advanced placement implies direct entry into a higher level of a course or program, based on recognition of a student's background and prior learning.

Articulation. Articulation is the system used by postsecondary institutions to determine those courses that are equivalent to one another. Articulated courses receive direct transfer credit from another institution.

Assessment. Assessment is the process of reviewing, measuring, and evaluating evidence of the student's learning to determine whether credit should be awarded.

Associate degree. An associate degree, as granted by a postsecondary institution, usually represents a minimum of 60 credits (20-24 courses). This degree can be granted only by community or university colleges accredited in British Columbia. Two associate degrees are available: the Associate in Arts and the Associate in Science.

Bachelor's degree. A bachelor's, (baccalaureate) degree, usually represents a minimum of 120 credits and has specific course requirements; all courses must be university-level. This degree can be granted only by a university or university college accredited in British Columbia.

Block credit. Block credit is the term used for equating a credential from another institution towards a specified number of credits at another institution. Specific course credits are not given in this system.

CAEL. CAEL is the acronym for the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning. This organization has been influential in creating opportunities for adults to gain recognition for their experiential learning from postsecondary institutions.

Career technical programs. These are programs, usually but not always limited to a certificate or diploma, offered by postsecondary institutions to train students for particular jobs.

Certificate. A certificate issued by a postsecondary institution usually represents a minimum of 30 credits (10-15 courses); most of the courses are prescribed and the student has few, if any, electives.

Certification. Certification is the process by which a professional association states that the individual is capable of practice.

Challenge exam. A challenge exam is a test prepared by a course instructor to measure a student's knowledge of course content; this type of exam is used for students who have not attended the course.

CLEP. CLEP stands for the College-level Examination Program offered by the Educational Testing Service. It is a standardized exam system used extensively in the United States to grant PLA credit.

Continuing education. Continuing education courses are usually offered on a part-time, noncredit basis. Although continuing education courses are often offered in the evenings, "night school" is not an accurate definition. Continuing education usually includes general interest as well as employment related courses.

Course. A formally organized learning experience, usually taught by an instructor from a prepared outline of content and learning outcomes.

Course analogue. When a course analogue system is used in granting PLA credit, it means the student's learning is required to match an existing credit course.

Credential. A credential is the document acknowledging completion of a particular program or course of study.

Credit(s). Credits are the values assigned to a formal course. Most courses are worth three or four credits, which means the student is in class for three or four hours per week for fourteen or fifteen weeks. Students enroled in credit courses must demonstrate their achievement; grades are usually assigned. Some institutions use the phrases "semester hours", "units," or "hours of credit" instead of "credits."

Diploma. A diploma offered by a postsecondary institution usually represents a minimum of 60 credits (20-24 courses). Although most courses are prescribed, the student may have some electives.

DANTES. Defense Activity for Nontraditional Educational Support is a program offering program equivalencies, recognized by colleges in the United States, for training undertaken while in the military.

Diffusion of innovation. Diffusion of innovation refers to the process by which a change gradually permeates a system.

Distance learning. Learning that is delivered by electronic, print, or other media, away from the institution where the curriculum was developed or the instruction originated.

Documentation. Documentation is the evidence submitted to prove the students' claim of learning. Documentation can be direct (examples of a student's work) or indirect (letters of reference, certificates of achievement).

Electives. Electives are courses not constituting core requirements of a program but which are relevant to the program and enrich student learning. Although all programs have specific course requirements, some programs allow students to include courses of their choosing.

Equivalency. The process of determining the comparability of two or more kinds of learning is equivalency. In prior learning assessment, equivalencies are most frequently made for comparable courses, for comparable programs, and for comparable learning outcomes.

Evaluation. Evaluation is the process used by an assessor to decide if the student's learning will be given credit.

Exemption. An exemption is a waiver of a requirement. A student may be excused from completing a course or program requirement if approval is granted by the appropriate institutional representative. Usually exemptions are only granted to students who have proven they have comparable learning. Although an exemption may be granted, the student usually has to replace the exempted course with an alternate.

Formal learning. Formal learning is the term used for learning acquired through structured credit courses.

Informal learning. Other terms for informal learning include prior learning, nonformal learning, and experiential learning. Informal learning generally refers to skills and knowledge acquired in situations other than formal study.

Innovation. Innovation is a new way of doing something.

Laddered curricula. Laddered curricula refers to programs offered at different levels (i.e., certificate, diploma, associate degree, baccalaureate degree) designed to build and interconnect with one another in such a way that the student can progress from one level to another without barriers.

Learning objectives. Every course should have learning outcomes that state what a student will know or be able to do as a result of taking the course.

Learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are specifications, usually stated in broad terms, stating what the abilities, skills, and knowledge acquired as a result of an educational experience.

Lower level courses. Lower level courses are those courses which are considered to be at the first and second years of a four year curriculum or which are completed during the first 60 credits of a 120 credit degree. They are considered to be broader and more introductory in nature than upper level courses.

Noncredit. Noncredit is a term used to describe courses, modules, and other structured learning experiences, taken by individuals for their personal or professional benefit, and usually not involving testing or demonstrating mastery. School boards, private training institutions, and governmental and non-governmental organizations as well as postsecondary institutions may offer noncredit courses.

Nonformal learning. Nonformal learning is also known as prior learning, informal learning, and experiential learning. Generally the term refers to skills and knowledge acquired in situations other than formal study and is sometimes referred to as nonsponsored learning.

PONSI. PONSI is the acronym for Program on Noncollegiate Sponsored Instruction. It is a program by which company and other noncollegiate courses are evaluated by faculty experts who determine whether courses are college level and who recommend academic credit for each course. The program is run by the American Council on Education (ACE).

Portfolio. A portfolio is a file or folder of information that systematically documents an individual's learning experiences and accomplishments.

Postsecondary education. Postsecondary education is that which takes place after high school. Colleges, university colleges, universities, and institutes are primary deliverers of postsecondary education. In some communities, adult education is offered through school districts.

Postsecondary level learning. Postsecondary level learning is learning equated to the level expected from students registered in a formal course at a postsecondary institution. The expectation is such learning will reflect knowledge of concepts, theories, and analysis and synthesis skills.

Practicum. A practicum is a "hands-on" learning experience. Students enroled in a practicum get a chance to apply their theoretical learning to a real-life situation. A practicum is usually taken for credit.

Prerequisite. Prerequisites are the courses that have to be completed to gain admission into subsequent courses.

Prior learning assessment. PLA generally refers to the process of assessing learning for credit at a postsecondary institution. The assessment is conducted by a qualified specialist, using valid and reliable means, to determine what has been learned, through nonformal means, worthy of credit in a course or program offered by the institution providing the credit.

Private training institutions. Private training institutions are those institutions that, while regulated by the province, are not authorized to grant degrees.

Programs. Programs are sets of learning experiences arranged to reflect coherent academic or training objectives. Most programs are described by the number of credits assigned to each course. When a student successfully completes a program, a credential is awarded. Credentials available from postsecondary institutions in British Columbia include certificates, diplomas, associate degrees, baccalaureate degrees, masters' degrees, and doctoral degrees.

Sponsored learning. Sponsored learning is learning that takes place in a formal educational setting.

Transcript. A transcript is the document provided by the postsecondary institution verifying the student's enrolment and achievement in the institution. The transcript records course title and number, date of enrolment, grades, and any credential(s) received. An official transcript bears the seal of the institution and an original, official signature.

Transfer credit. Transfer credit is the practice of awarding comparable credit by a postsecondary institution for course or program credit gained at another postsecondary institution.

University college. In British Columbia, a university college is a postsecondary institution offering programs ranging from short-term vocational (less than a year) to baccalaureate programs.

University transfer. University transfer refers to those disciplines offered by both community colleges and universities which are primarily academic in nature and do not lead directly to a career.

Upper level. Upper level courses are considered to be those courses taken in the third and fourth year of a baccalaureate program and which have a greater degree of specificity and depth than lower level courses.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

> Initially, of course, even the slightest proposal for educational change encounters the sturdy, rampart-like rigidity of scepticism and tradition. Even after acceptance, a promising new program will be only an ornamental appendage to an existing college or university. . . . Under such conditions, an innovation which has flourished in response to an emerging market demand declines rapidly when that demand lags. (Hall, 1991, p. 127)

Introduction

This chapter presents a review of selected research and literature and provides the conceptual basis of this MARP. The literature review focuses, first, on an examination of theoretical models of adoption of change including a discussion of change, innovation, and resistance to change. Literature on the acceptance of innovation, factors influencing individual adoption of change, and a discussion of the relationship between organizational change and innovation are included.

Second, a discussion of change and resistance as experienced in higher education is included. This is followed by an explication of the role collegiate culture plays in adaptation or resistance to change. Other changes in the delivery of higher education including the needs of nontraditional students and technological innovations are discussed with a view to understanding how innovation can proceed within higher education and how barriers are overcome. Since the purpose of this MARP is to examine the current status of PLA at UCFV in order to develop an articulation model with private postsecondary institutions, a review of prior learning assessment, including both the historical development of PLA, the current context of PLA, and the status of PLA in British Columbia and Canada is included. A review of the literature on the acceptability of the various PLA methodologies is provided. The needs of adult, nontraditional students will be reviewed within the context of prior learning assessment models and strategies. Finally, a discussion of the barriers and resistance experienced as a result of implementing change within higher education is provided. The final section of the literature review is an overview of strategies for dealing with resistance in higher education.

Innovation, Change and Resistance

Change in social systems is inevitable. However, it seldom occurs in a smooth, balanced, and unresisted manner. Consequently, the adoption of an innovation may be both time consuming and difficult. Rogers (1983) elaborates that getting a new idea accepted, even when it has obvious advantages, is often very difficult.

Acceptability of Innovation

The most important factors affecting the adoption of a new idea are its compatibility with existing values and beliefs of individuals and their past experience with change in the social system. Rogers (1983) believes concepts of diffusion research are generalizable to both organizational and educational systems and are also applicable to diffusion of ideas and the change process.

Readiness for change must be a precursor to change. There may be strategies which can be used to create readiness for change within organizations. However, these strategies need to be based on the perceived urgency of the change and the extent to which members of the organization are ready for and receptive to change (Armenakis, Harris, & Mossholder, 1993). Generating receptivity to change requires those who are being required to adopt change have an understanding of the pressures, both internal and external, that make the change necessary and desirable (Blake, 1992; Carr, 1994; Reynolds, 1994).

The persons most comfortable with change are usually the ones proposing it. People tend to resist being changed, especially when the change appears to have a benefit for someone else. Generally, change produces anxiety and is, therefore, resisted (Rogers, 1983; Hall, 1991).

Resistance is generally a label applied by managers and consultants to the perceived behaviour of organizational members who seem unwilling to accept or help implement an organizational change. The sources of resistance to organizational change include parochial self-interest, misunderstanding and lack of trust, different assessments of what change is needed, and low tolerance for change (Couglan, 1992; Werner & Lynch, 1994).

Consideration needs to be given to distinguishing between initial resistance and experiential resistance. In the first case, resistance may simply be a characteristic innate to all: we resist that with which we are unfamiliar (Rogers, 1983; Hall, 1991). In the second case, the resistance may have more to do with the nature of the change than with the individual (Levine, 1980).

Innovations perceived as having a relative advantage for the adopter will be more easily adopted than those perceived as less advantageous (Rogers, 1983; Hall, 1991). Objective reality is not the issue; the issue is how the innovation is perceived by the adopter.

Those innovations compatible with existing values, past experience, and needs of the potential adopters will be adopted more easily. Adoption of innovations requiring alterations to an individual's value and belief system will be resisted and change will be slower (Rogers, 1983; Hall, 1991). Herling (1994) believes resistance to innovation is simply a normal form of resistance to change in general.

The more complex an innovation is, and thus the more difficult for the adopter to understand, the greater will be the degree of resistance. Simple innovations are adopted more readily than complex innovations. If innovations can be experimented with on a limited basis, what Rogers (1983) calls "trialability," then they are more likely to be adopted easily. If the benefits of innovations are readily observable, they are more likely to be adopted easily.

Most individuals adapt change based upon a subjective evaluation of an innovation that has been communicated to them by people like themselves who have adopted a particular innovation (Rogers, 1983, p. 18). This transfer occurs most readily between two individuals who are alike and share values (Rogers, 1983).

Individual Adoption of Innovation

Rogers (1983) sees several steps in an individual's decision to adopt innovations. They are knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, confirmation, and discontinuance. In the knowledge stage, the individual seeks to find out what the innovation is and its capacity to solve a problem. During the second stage, persuasion, the individual seeks information to reduce uncertainty about the expected consequences. This information is usually sought from peers. The third stage, decision, leads either to adoption or rejection. He summarizes these stages as follows:

> Most individuals will not adopt an innovation without trying it first on a probationary basis to determine its usefulness in their own situation. This small-scale trial is often part of the decision to adopt, and is important as a means to decrease the perceived uncertainty of the innovation for the adopter. (Rogers, 1983, p. 172)

During the fifth stage, confirmation, people generally seek reinforcement for their adoption decision, but may reverse their decision if exposed to conflicting messages about the decision. Sometimes an innovation is rejected after it has been accepted; Rogers calls this discontinuance. He notes this is more likely to occur among later adopters of an innovation than early adopters and discontinuance is an indication that the innovation has not been fully integrated and routinized into the adopter's ongoing practice (Rogers, 1983, p. 189).

Rogers (1983) defines opinion leadership as the degree to which an individual is able to influence the attitudes and behaviour of others in a desired way and with relative frequency

(p. 27). When he compares opinion leaders with followers, he finds opinion leaders: (a) are more exposed to all forms of external communication, (b) are more cosmopolite (have more relationships with others outside the social system), (c) have somewhat higher social status, and (d) are more innovative.

Rogers (1983) theorizes that individual adoption of innovation follows a normal curve. Based on their degree of adoption of innovation, he sorts adopters into five categories. These categories are (a) innovators, (b) early adopters, (c) early majority, (d) late majority, and (e) laggards. Innovators are only 2.5% of the population with respect to a given innovation. Early adopters comprise 13.5% of the population, while the early majority are 34% of the population. The late majority comprise another 34%, while the laggards (many of whom never adopt) are 16% of the population (Rogers & Shoemaker, 1973, p. 182). If the innovator and early adopter categories are combined, then those who adopt an innovation early comprise 16% of the population.

Rogers (1983) describes innovators as individuals who are venturesome, eager to try new ideas, and have very cosmopolite social relationships. They tend to have communication patterns and friendships among cliques of innovators (even where there are geographical distances). They must be able to cope with high degrees of uncertainty and willing to accept occasional setbacks. He notes they may not be respected by other members of the social system, but play the important gatekeeper role in the diffusion process (p. 248). Bergquist (1992) characterizes early adopters and innovators as more likely to come from the non-dominant culture of the institution and to be on the fringes of the institution.

Rogers (1983) calls those he characterizes as "early adopters" as more respectable, a more integrated part of the local social system, and having the greatest degree of leadership in most social systems. They are usually considered the people to check with before adopting an innovation; they serve as role models, are respected by their peers, and are "the embodiment of successful and discrete use of new ideas" (Rogers, 1983, p. 249). Their role is to decrease uncertainty about a new idea by adopting it and thus conveying a subjective evaluation of the benefit of the innovation.

The early majority are characterized by Rogers (1983) as having a "deliberate" style. They adopt just before they see the rest of the world adopting. They seldom hold leadership positions and they tend to deliberate longer than the first two categories in adopting change. These are the people who follow with deliberate willingness but seldom lead (Rogers, 1983, p. 249).

The late majority of adopters tend to remain sceptical of innovation. They do not adopt until most others in the system have done so. Removal of uncertainty and the pressure of peers is most important to them. When they do adopt, they tend to do so because acceptance of the innovation has become a necessity for survival within the system and the answer to increasing peer pressure. Bergquist (1992) suggests the late majority are more concerned with the political strategy of adopting. They adopt when it becomes politically wise to do so.

Laggards (Rogers, 1983) tend to be traditional and their point of reference tends to be the past. Generally suspicious of change and innovation, by the time they adopt an innovation the initial innovation may have already been succeeded by another. Bergquist (1992) suggests laggards are "typically stagnant or insecure members of the collegial culture or disillusioned members of the developmental culture" (p. 203).

Organizational Change and Innovation

Rogers, discusses innovations sponsored by organizations rather than individuals:

> Problems of implementation are likely to be more serious when the adopter is an organization rather than an individual. In an organizational setting, a number of individuals are usually involved in the innovation-decision process, and the implementers are often a different set of people from the decision makers. (Rogers, 1993, p. 174)

Characteristics of organizations having a positive effect on the rate of adoption include: large size, positive attitudes towards change, complexity of the organization, degree of interconnectedness, and degree of organizational slack. Centralization of the organization is related inversely to the degree of innovation (Rogers, 1983, pp. 358-359).

Rogers (1983) delineates five stages in the innovation process in organizations similar to the stages in individual adaptation of innovation. The first stage, called agenda setting, exists where there is a performance gap between what the organization needs to do and what it is doing. The second stage, matching, involves reality testing and examination of the feasibility of the innovation for solving the problem. The third stage, redefining/restructuring, occurs when a unit is created within the organization responsible for carrying out the innovation. The fourth stage is clarification where the meaning of the innovation is refined (sometimes redefined) and absorbed into organizational mission. The fifth stage, routinizing, refers to the situation where the innovation has been widely adopted and has become an integral part of the organization. The timing of these stages is not always sequential.

> The innovation process stages usually occurred in the expected time order when the innovation was imported by the organization from external sources. But when the innovation originated from within the organization, the stages in the innovation process appeared muddled and overlapping. (Rogers, 1983, p. 365)

Innovation, Change, Resistance, and Higher Education

There is a great deal of literature on change in higher education. Much of it deals with innovative new colleges or divisions within the university rather than with programmatic changes. An early study (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1977) discussed five types of change in American higher education: (a) the establishment of new colleges; (b) the development of innovative enclaves within existing institutions; (c) holistic changes which include the adoption of a major curriculum change characterized by a unified and coherent philosophy of education; (d) piecemeal change, adoption, or new courses; and (e) changes on the periphery--involving experimentation and alternatives (pp. 256-257). This earlier work on change in higher education made the point that faculty members may become disenchanted with certain dominant practices and "strike out in new directions or become advocates of certain [new] educational approaches" (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, p. 76).

Kozma (1985) suggests change within educational institutions can be regarded as a confrontational process between groups or individuals resulting from different positions in social structure and the environment. Seymour (1988) states academic program change has "been characterized by the following terms: slow, idiosyncratic, externally driven, ever present and parochial" (p. xix).

The basic response to change initiated outside the organization is to first discredit then to discard (Kozma, 1985). Change promoted from outside the institution is often considered as "not being relevant to our way of doing things," or "its fine, but it wouldn't work in our system" (Seymour, 1988, p. 5).

Faculty often seem distressingly sluggish and unwilling to change (Kozma, 1985). Barriers to change are likely to arise when "reforms threaten important academic values, particularly the primacy of intellectual standards" (Bok, 1986, p. 185). According to Becher (1989), loyalty to the discipline overrides loyalty to the institution and faculty will go along with the "party line." Faculty within disciplines will change their views, however, to deal with the changing environment and to compete successfully with rival interests (Kozma, 1985; Becher, 1989). Those changes which are being promoted by faculty from disciplines with relatively higher status, and which have resources and prestige attached to them, are more likely to be adopted.

Faculty will resist new initiatives so large or so visible that failure could diminish the prestige of the institution or impair its ability to attract able students and talented professors (Bok, 1986). Those innovations that will succeed are ones that do not threaten the professional interests and values of the faculty and are inexpensive to implement (Bok, 1986; Becher, 1989). Bok (1986) suggests that

> the reformer's hope therefore, is that the new venture will be successful enough to overcome all opposition. It may prove to be so popular that other students will insist on having it too. If conservative faculty members see that they can adopt the new methods without excessive risk or trouble, they may gradually come around to accepting the innovation. (p. 188)

Several writers (Turner, 1990; Hall, 1991; Armenakis, Harris, & Mossholder, 1993) have identified that changes in product may be more acceptable than changes in process within higher education as the outcomes are more tangible and thus engender less resistance. Rogers (1983) points out it is far harder to get people to accept process innovations than product innovations. Turner (1990, p. 6) found the key factors in the success or failure of innovative projects in higher education were power, leadership, ownership, degree of perceived gain/loss, openness, and linkages between areas.

Rogers (1983) also talks about organizational innovativeness. Defining organizations as "stable systems of individuals who work together to achieve common goals through a hierarchy of ranks and a division of labor," he notes while there are many barriers creating resistance to change in an organization, change is also one of the fundamental processes enabling organizations to thrive and survive (p. 349). Those organizations that cannot change are doomed to failure and entropy. Kozma (1985) characterizes this "diffusion framework" as a variance model. For Kozma, a variance model is one which identifies characteristics of either the individual or the organization which predict successful change.

Levine (1980) identifies four stages in the innovation process in higher education: (a) recognizing the need, (b) planning and formulating a solution, (c) initiating and implementing a plan for change plan, and (d) institutionalizing or terminating the innovation. He contrasts his four stages with Rogers' five stages of (a) awareness, (b) interest, (c) evaluation, (d) trial, and (e) adoption (p. 7). Levine sees his first stage (recognition of need) as being comparable to Rogers' first three stages (awareness, interest, and evaluation). Levine's second stage (planning and formulating a solution) does not have a comparable point in Roger's schema. However, Levine sees his third stage (initiation) as being comparable to Roger's "trial" and his fourth stage (institutionalization or termination) as being comparable to Roger's fifth stage of routinization (p. 7).

In reviewing the literature on organizational change and adaption and resistance to innovation, Levine (1980) finds resistance to innovation is related to organizational stability.

Institutions with more instability (for example rotating department chairs, no graduate programs, greater student mobility) were more likely to be innovative than those with greater stability. Flexible boundaries (as in cross departmental offerings and fluid divisions) were also positively correlated with adoption of innovation (pp. 168-170).

Hoyle (1988) suggests micropolitical analysis can be helpful in understanding resistance to change within educational settings. When proposed innovations threaten the territorial interests of the faculty, they tend to be in opposition to the innovation. Such tactics as "losing" recommendations from interested parties, "rigging agendas," "massaging the minutes of meetings", and "inventing consensus that has not been tested" are likely to be employed in an attempt to control the nature or direction of the proposed innovation (Hoyle, 1988, p. 260).

Collegiate Culture and Adaptation to Change

There have been several studies suggesting the culture of the organization is an extremely important factor in how change and innovation will be received within the organization. One way to study why some innovations are accepted and why some are not is to focus on institutional choices. The extent to which innovations match with the culture of the organization determines whether or not these innovations are likely to survive. "Innovation in content, so long as it fits within accepted constructs and paradigms, is expected, accepted, and integrated. But innovation in process brings resistance and tension, as it forces confrontation between the traditional and the new" (Hall, 1991, p. 128).

A cultural force either promoting or impeding the acceptance of change is the climate for change, which Seymour (1988) has defined as the degree to which individuals in the organization support or do not support change. Three important dimensions of climate that need to be considered are: (a) the perception individuals within the organization have about the need for change, (b) the openness of the organization to change, and (c) the potential for change (Seymour, 1988). "All of the forces that contribute to stability in personality or in social systems influence the rate of innovation" (p. 6).

Any discussion of culture has to include a discussion of power and decision making. The micropolitics of organizations "is an organizational underworld in which we all recognize and in which we all participate" (Hoyle, 1988, p. 256). An understanding of the micropolitics of the organization assists in viewing how and by whom decision are made. Insofar as power is unequally distributed within organizations and among individuals, "political frames of reference will assist in understanding how and why some innovations take root and others allowed to languish" (Hoyle, 1988, p. 256).

Seymour suggests that integral to the culture of higher education are several characteristics forming political obstacles to innovation. These include (a) most change threatens secured positions, (b) higher education institutions are highly differentiated and fragmented, (c) decision making power tends to be diffused rather than centralized, (d) any change which challenges the ideas of meritocracy and specialization is likely to be resisted on "value" grounds, (e) there are few ways of measuring either educational outcomes or predicting future demands, (f) most faculty members are isolated from new information about teaching and learning innovations, and (g) the whole governance structure of the academy is "intended to carry out established practices by established means" (Seymour, 1988, p. 13).

Thus, the emphasis in higher education seems to be doing what has always been done. Bergquist (1992) wrote "our organizations often lack the `glue' that is found in cultures oriented toward collective welfare and interpersonal responsibility" (p. 168). Academic decisions are made not in terms of what is beneficial for all, but in terms of what is beneficial for a particular faculty member or a particular discipline (Becher, 1989; Bergquist, 1992). Culturally, higher education sees itself as the last bastion of rationality in American society (Bergquist, 1992, p. 169). Decisions about academic propriety are frequently made on an emotional or political basis, but then are cloaked by the notion of rationality.

Integration with other new projects can help buffer a resisted change, especially if other more acceptable program initiatives, more fully aligned with the dominant culture of the institution, are included with the desired change (Berqquist, 1992). Educational institutions change slowly, if at all, and the dominant culture seems to remain one of little acceptance of change (Levine, 1980; Hall, 1991).

Organizations are defined by their paradigms. Change which requires major paradigm shifts will likely to be resisted (Simsek & Louis, 1994). Evolutionary change is more acceptable than revolutionary change as it requires no paradigm shifts (Bergquist, 1992). Thus, first order changes (evolutionary) are more likely to be accepted. "Typically power and manipulation are required to bring about second order change--power being most often used by representatives of the managerial culture and manipulation being employed by representatives of the developmental cultures" (Bergquist, 1992, p. 179).

Changing Patterns in the Delivery of Higher Education

Change which occurs in higher education today is often triggered by factors outside the institution (Lippitt, Langseth & Mossop, 1985). Easterby-Smith (1987) viewed four major environmental forces (technical, economic, political, and social) which influence organizational change. He described these as long term drivers of organizational change. Mohrman, Mohran, Ledford, Cummings, and Lawler (1989) cite several trends that should be examined for an understanding of the thrusts behind demands for educational reform: societal changes, technological development, increased competition, and changing expectations of stakeholders. In British Columbia, demands have been coming for increased accountability within the system (Dennison, 1995). This section of the literature review will examine two sources of demand for change: the changing profile of higher education participants and the increasing use of technological delivery systems.

Nontraditional Students and Higher Education

Cross, writing twenty years ago (1975), thought the challenge of higher education in the future would be the development of alternative methods of education to satisfy needs of the new, diverse, adult population. Martorana and Kuhns (1975) predicted that the next twenty years would be an especially innovative period in higher education. Included in these innovations would be increased enrolment by nontraditional students, decreased financial support from government, corporate partnerships, and life long learning demands. CAEL became established (Gamson, 1989) precisely to ensure that the needs of nontraditional (adult) students would be met within higher education.

Adult learning has been defined by Tough (1977) as the process by which individuals continue to develop their knowledge skills and attitudes over their lifetimes. Prior learning assessment would evaluate the results of the nonformal, informal, and self directed learning acquired by adults (Mockler & Spear, 1982) for credit within higher educational institutions.

Nonformal learning (Meyers, 1975) is generally considered to be learning which is systematic and planned, but occurs outside the boundaries of higher educational institutions and is often referred to as non-sponsored education. This learning is often comprised of courses delivered in the military, workplace, and other similar sites. Adults do not usually self-select nonformal learning; it is dictated by employers or professional associations. This type of learning has often been seen as the equivalent of formal learning in the United States, as for example, through the DANTES and PONSI systems (Stewart & Spille, 1989; Swiczewicz, 1990; Rose, 1991). Davis (1994) believes since the growing criticism of postsecondary education is that it lacks relevance to the real work, accommodating workplace based training would help combat this (p. 19).

The social function of accredited learning remains one of the prime reasons for adult participation in formalized settings (Tough, 1991). Many potential students do not participate at all because of barriers. If they attend post-secondary educational institutions at all, they may do so because of the institutions' role as a certifying and credentialing agency (Thomas, 1995b). Swiczewicz (1990) suggests one innovative approach institutions might assume would be to function simply as a credentialing agency for all forms of learning rather than just providing learning. However, Davis (1994) believes an important function of the college is to assist learners in deciding what to learn, planning the learning, and in obtaining the subject learning. Credentialing is just one of the roles higher education plays. Hall (1991) talks about education as a cartel for the awarding of academic credit. He goes on to note the following:

> In this arrangement, certifiable, accredited learning is a packaged commodity, available only from those members organizations that have met and that continue to meet the regulations of the presegmented marketing. Such accredited learning, in the forms of degrees, diplomas, and certificates, is a regulated substance and, as such, is available only to students who come to

> the proper establishment, present the appropriate prescription, and proceed according to the instructions on the label. For adult students, in particular, such restrictions often precluded, until very recently, the achievement of a college degree. (p. 65)

Self directed learning (Tough, 1977; Knowles, 1984; Knowles, 1986;) includes those learning activities which are planned, designed, and directed by individuals as they pursue their own learning objectives. Tough (1991) indicates almost all adults pursue self directed learning, often without realizing it. Rubenson (1989) includes such activities as television watching and reading as examples of self directed learning.

Elitism may be one of the sources of institutional resistance to the adult student

> Most scholars of the adult learning process agree that adult students require a more learner centered than teacher centered approach and that many adult students seem to benefit from greater participation in, even control of, the education process. . . .The adult's prior experience can also be an important motivator in learning and is more likely to lead to a more problem (i.e. solution) centered rather than discipline centered approach to curriculum. (Hall, 1991, p. 77)

In this view, adult students present difficulties to the organization since they insist upon being in charge of their own learning. The premise behind higher education, at this point in time, is that faculty determine what is to be learned, who is to learn it, how it is to be learned, and how it will be evaluated (Thomas, 1995b).

At the same time, demands are coming from the business to accredit workplace training (Simosko, 1988; Turner, 1990; Davis, 1994) and business is offering courses for their employers comparable to courses offered in college classrooms. While there are a few pilot projects that link colleges and major industry (Surma, 1993), these have tended to be isolated instances. Apparently, there is much resistance from faculty to accrediting learning they have not delivered (Hall, 1991).

If higher education institutions do not accredit this learning, then it is likely that more "Motorola" universities where the private employer becomes both the provider and accreditor of learning will become the norm. The catalog at Sperry (Unisys) is comparable in size and number of courses to a small university and the range of courses offered resembles many of the courses offered at colleges and universities (Hall, 1991, p. 78). Since the workplace is a major source for learning for most adults, awarding credit for workplace courses would be an effective tool to recruit adults to campus and to ameliorate some of the factors identified as barriers to participation in formal work-related learning activities (Davis, 1994).

Accelerating technological changes, shifts in labour force distribution, and increased competition from foreign countries have induced job and skill obsolescence for many workers (Levine, 1980; Drucker, 1994). Increasingly, employers are demanding "information age" workers who require an education system which promotes flexibility and emphasizes the adaptation skills necessary to accommodate these continuous transitions (Levine, 1980; Thomas, 1989; Drucker, 1994). What one can do will be more important than the degree one has.

Unless higher education makes itself more relevant to the needs of the workplace, it will soon be seen as even more irrelevant than it is. Learning will be seen as something you do on the job; the role of higher education may be limited to providing the credential that opens the door. Even that role may be supplanted by corporate based education as business continues to pursue a more active role in workforce training (Hall, 1991; Davis, 1993; Davis, 1994).

Learning outcomes for nonsponsored experiential learning activities (i.e. self directed learning) are often equivalent to the learning outcomes of someone attending traditional higher education (Apps, 1988; Stewart & Spille, 1988). Institutions recognizing the value of such nonsponsored experiential learning have adopted the innovation of awarding credit for the learning which has been evaluated as the equivalent to similar higher education programs (Simosko, 1988). Credit for prior learning is much more likely to occur in institutions that emphasize curricula with specified learning outcomes rather than in those institutions where credentials equate to accumulation of a specified amount of credit (Apps, 1988; Simosko, 1988).

Innovation and Technology in Higher Education

Another area of higher education undergoing change at the present time is the area of computer assisted learning and the introduction of technology and its relationship with distance education. The literature on technological change in higher education suggests faculty need to overcome their fears and resistance to technology as well as alter the way they teach and students learn (Kozma, 1985; Burke, 1994).

The introduction of new technologies in education including computer mediated classrooms (where students communicate directly with the faculty member by computer rather than have face to face interaction), two way video classrooms (with a faculty member and a class in one location and another class in a distant location), computer assisted learning, and other technological innovations have meant faculty have to change the way they teach (Cunningham, Farquharson, & Hull, 1991; Hall, 1991; Blake, 1994). Faculty have been notoriously resistant to these notions. A few faculty (the early adopters) become the spearheads for change and carry the "message" to the unconverted. However, the evidence is that the unconverted still continue to teach in the same way. The literature suggests when there are financial incentives to change, faculty are more motivated to overcome their fears of the technology and adopt the new technological innovation (Hall, 1991; Burke, 1994). Resistance to technological change appears to be greatest where faculty fear replacement by the technology (i.e., loss of jobs) (Burke, 1994).

Studies focusing on technology and social change (Cunningham, Farquharson, & Hull, 1991) suggest fear of change brought upon by technology change arises mostly from misunderstandings and miscommunications of policy rather than from accurate information. Workers fear technology most when they see technology as causing both a loss of job skills and a change in the way work is organized.

In studying the impact of technological changes, Kozma (1985) noted innovations were rarely implemented in addition to faculty members regular activities. Released time, in whatever form, was crucial to the planning, development and implementation of the innovation. He indicates regardless of the level of financial support for the innovation, failure to adopt the innovation was the norm. "It was not that the innovation was considered and rejected, but rather that it did not evolve from the previous experience of a colleague" (Kozma, 1985, p. 309).

From the failure of technology programs to penetrate the mainstream of higher education (Kozma, 1985), there are several generalizations that can be made about faculty adaptation to change. Hall posits innovations in product are more readily accepted than innovations in process (1991). Thus, most faculty will resist innovations forcing them to change their teaching strategies (as is in the case of computer mediated classrooms) (Hall, 1991, p. 111). Changes requiring faculty to assume new and previously unexplored roles are likely to be resisted (Kozma, 1985). No innovation that omits or diminishes the critical faculty role in adopting the innovation is likely to be recognized in higher learning (Levine, 1980; Kozma; 1985; Levine, 1989). However, innovation often requires that faculty assume new or sharply redefined roles (Hall, 1991, p. 125).

Prior Learning Assessment as Innovation in Higher Education

This section of the literature review will examine the historical background of prior learning assessment methodologies, review the current practice of PLA in countries other than Canada, and then examine the current status of PLA in Canada and

British Columbia. Finally, an analysis of the barriers and resistance to implementing PLA systems will be presented.

Methods of Assessment

Historically, (Meyer, 1975) high school graduation has not necessarily been a prerequisite for accessing higher education. However, concerns were raised by universities about the adequacy of adult preparation. Thus, during the 1930s, the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) began to develop tests to measure aptitude for university level studies. Within a few years, there were demands that the CEEB develop standardized tests of achievement.

Because of the large number of returning World War II veterans who were accessing college level education, the American Council on Education (ACE) began recommending the granting of college credits for learning acquired in the military. This was the first time in the history of the United States where there were many older nontraditional students (often non high school graduates) seeking admission to colleges and also requesting recognition of experiential learning (Rose, 1991). These demands became codified as the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Educational Support (DANTES) system in the 1950s. Based on the success of the DANTES program, where service members could get their training and experience translated into college credits, industry began to demand a similar system which would recognize the training they offered. The American Council on Education (ACE), building on the success of the DANTES system, developed a program called Programs on Non-Collegiate Sponsored Instruction

(PONSI) which produced a system of articulation of many nonformal postsecondary courses and programs and is widely accepted in the United States today. PONSI, which has been in existence since the late 1960s, evaluates a wide variety of training programs offered outside the formal postsecondary system, in terms of content and objectives, for block credit towards collegiate programs.

During the 1950s and 1960s, some institutions offered formalized testing programs to assess prior learning and thus attract nontraditional learners into the system. Advanced Placement (AP) examinations, administered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS), were established to allow able high school students to be exempted from repeating courses or given credit for courses at postsecondary institutions.

The American College Testing Proficiency Examination Program (ACT-PEP) exams, first established by the New York State Board of Regents, are designed to test adults' mastery of material. They are widely used by American colleges to grant academic credit for learning achieved outside the formal system.

In 1965, ETS started the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) series of examinations. About 50 subject examinations are offered, primarily for subjects at the lower level in arts, sciences, and business. In addition, there are five general exams that are less course-specific and cover material taught at the lower levels in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, mathematics, and English.

In 1974, the Educational Testing Service started the Cooperative Assessment of Experiential Learning Project. In 1976, the Council for the Advancement of Experiential Learning (CAEL) was formed with the purpose of providing research and promoting methods to assist academic institutions in the assessment of prior learning that had not been previously transcripted. While CAEL's contribution to the field of prior learning assessment has been to promote all forms of prior learning assessment (including standardized exams, PONSI, DANTES, ACT-PEP, and AP), their real contribution has been in the area of portfolio assisted assessment, which they pioneered (Keeton, 1976; Simosko, 1985; Simosko, 1988; Whitaker, 1989). However, considering the size, energy and level of commitment of individuals in CAEL, prior learning assessment has never really accepted within academic institutions. Prior learning assessment, even in institutions which claim to practice it, has remained on the fringes of the institution, often relegated to programs for nontraditional students (Gamson, 1989; Swiczewicz, 1990; Hall, 1991).

Over 90% of colleges and universities in the United States recognize some form of ACT, AP, CLEP, or DANTES as prior learning assessment. At least half the institutions in the United States have portfolio assisted assessment available to students. However, while 90% of the institutions have formal PLA policies, a recent project which surveyed these institutions found that only 35% could be considered active in using PLA methods with students as measured by the award of 200 credit hours per year (Swiczewicz, 1990).

Accreditation of prior learning (APL), first introduced in the 1980s in Britain, is now used extensively as a substitute for admission requirements for adult learners in the college system. Training Enterprise Councils (TECs), employing local assessors and trainers, have enabled APL to become integrated into the college system. Criterion referenced assessment tools have been developed for every occupation. The generally accepted view in the United Kingdom is learners should be assessed against course outcomes and should not be awarded credit just because time has been spent in a program.

While there have been some attempts to integrate APL into the university system, APL has not gained acceptance in traditional United Kingdom universities. Butterworth and Edwards (1993) discuss a pilot project in APL using distance methodologies at the Open University but note that it is limited in acceptability to certain types of programs, most noticeably career programs.

Australia and New Zealand have been very active in PLA activities. Maslen (1995) details Australia's plans to establish a national agency to oversee the transfer of academic credit. This agency serves as a broker between prospective students and universities and makes it possible for students to obtain credit for certain types of work experience. This agency also evaluates other forms of learning, such as private training and courses run by employers, for possible university credit. Dennison (1995) points out this is possible because of the highly centralized university and college systems in Australia and New Zealand.

PLA in Canada

The first major initiative in PLA was in the Quebec College d'Education Generale et Professionnel (CEGEP) system in the mid to late 1980s. As a result of the Jean Commission on Education, Quebec implemented a PLA system at all levels of education. An outcome of the provincial and institutional mandate for PLA has been that the CEGEP curricula became more competence based (identified as a prerequisite for a successful PLA system). While PLA has been implemented in the secondary and CEGEP levels, it has yet to be recognized by Quebec's universities.

Quebec's experience has created the realization there are four factors that must be in place for PLA to be successful. These factors are (a) PLA must be integrated into the institutions's administrative structure and process, (b) the assessment of PLA must be valid and reliable, (c) there must be adequate financial support (which has not always materialized), and (d) faculty needs must be considered (Sansregret, 1993).

In Ontario, PLA has been mandated by the Council of Regents and each community college (CAAT) is attempting to implement programs. A provincial level PLA Advisory committee has been created and there is a Secretariat whose mandate is staff development, training, and program coordination (Ontario Council of Regents, 1993). All colleges must make a proportion of their curriculum open to PLA. Portfolio courses are available to students and adult students can have their learning assessed by portfolio, challenge exam, standardized test, or some combination of these methods.

Although there is a high level of interest in PLA in Ontario, there are many issues left to be resolved, especially the funding of PLA activities. Unfortunately, Ontario universities have yet to implement policies for PLA and the PLA impetus is limited to the CAATs. However, there has been some interest from some of the Ontario universities in at least investigating a system of PLA (A. Thomas, electronic mail, April 16, 1995). The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) has created a sub-committee to investigate the university position on PLA. Some universities are willing to look at the subject, although there remains much resistance (Thomas, 1995a). Thomas (1995a) points out that given the central authority of the province over the CAATs, a PLA system can be mandated at the college level. The universities, however, are autonomous and free to set their own direction. Government may urge, but may not dictate.

Sansregret (1989) indicates two reasons adults have for desiring prior learning assessment programs: in order to get a degree or credential in the least time, especially in a society where credentialism has increasingly become the norm, and to validate their lives (and learning) on the job and through experience. Although she observed that academic institutions, especially in Canada, appear to be interested in prior learning assessment, they continue to express concerns about ensuring the reliability and validity of assessments, the impact PLA has on funding, and faculty acceptance of PLA.

Thomas (1989), in a study of university and college admission practices in Canada, observes that "the use of prior learning assessment for admission and the granting of advanced standing in Canadian education seems generally more widespread than the rhetoric and elaborate formal admission procedures suggests" (p. 313). His analysis indicates that, while having no formal PLA policies in place, colleges and universities do, on a case by case basis, recognize students come to the university with a great deal of prior learning and are willing to recognize that prior learning for admissions purposes if not for credit.

In 1989, Thomas explained that, with the exception of Quebec (which did have provincial policies in place), the use of PLA:

> appears to be perceived as an abberation reserved for special cases. The applicant has no rights, and information about the availability of procedures is minimal. In contrast to developments in the United States, the United Kingdom, and elsewhere, no public policy or campaign seems in evidence. (p. 313)

However, there have been changes in the intervening six years. PLA has become a major agenda item within provincial ministries of advanced education, the college system, and the federal government (Fletcher, 1994). Prior learning assessment has grown from an activity conducted on the side-lines to a major concern of the federal and provincial governments.

In provinces other than British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec, there are no formal PLA policies at the provincial level, although there is considerable interest within the provinces and specific institutions in implementing PLA systems. Several maritime colleges are experimenting with PLA at the program level. Alberta has been developing a "white paper" on PLA and discussing the implementation of PLA. The pressure to implement PLA is intense in Canada as there are too many students competing for too few funded spaces (Fletcher, 1994; Morin, 1994).

A National Forum on Prior Learning Assessment was held in Ottawa in October of 1995. This forum attracted almost 600 participants and was sponsored by Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC). The federal government, which is mandated with providing funding to postsecondary education as well as manpower planning, is very eager to create a system where adults with significant learning will not have to enrol in classes containing material or skills previously mastered as they attempt to upgrade their credentials. As well, there is impetus for a system of prior learning assessment that would accommodate training offered by industry as well as the training acquired by immigrants in their native country (Training for What?, 1995).

Barriers and Resistance to Implementing PLA

There has been some research on PLA and institutional penetration (the degree to which PLA has become an integral part of the institution) and the level of acceptability (or resistance) to PLA and innovation in general. This research is by no means conclusive, but does set the stage for further research.

Bird (1983), in an early study on PLA, postulated the nontraditional education movement posed a serious challenge to the basic assumptions of ideology in higher education and would result in resistance to the adoption of nontraditional programs. Later, in a study of the interorganizational relations between higher education and industry focusing on a Ford plant and three colleges and universities involved in a consortium, Surma (1993) still found resistance among higher education personnel to implementing a system of assessment of prior learning for the Ford workers. The resistance was found to be based on the perceived degree of threat, which is compatible with Bird's earlier work.

Based on the results of a comparative study of two theories of resistance to innovation using medical records administration baccalaureate degree programs as the cases, Brown Harvey (1992) observed faculty generally resist those innovations which would negatively affect their social status and job perquisites within the institution. This is consistent with Seymour's (1988) findings which suggest vested interests are a problem confronting any organization in their innovation attempts. He states any change which jeopardizes the rights, privileges, or advantages of specific individuals is likely to be resisted (p. 5). Among institutions with relatively higher status, there was more resistance to innovation as faculty tended to see it as lowering the relative prestige of their credentials (Hall, 1991).

In a study (Fisher, 1991) of the prior learning assessment program at Neumann College, portfolio methods of prior learning assessment were underutilized because there were serious institutional concerns about the possibility of loss of academic integrity when using this method. Philosophies held by faculty members of what constitutes a college degree affected their views of portfolio assessment. Recognition of prior learning is personally significant to students. However, if it is not central to the mission of the institution, then students will be misled.

Swiczewicz (1990) and Harriger (1991) were consistent in finding that the resistance in PLA is primarily to portfolio assisted methods of evaluation. Transfer, standardized exams (i.e., CLEP), and course challenges, are much more integrated within the institution. Course challenges, especially, are more likely to be deemed acceptable by the institution, since the department and institution are in control of the outcomes.

Some of the resistance to prior learning assessment centres around the perceived loss of faculty autonomy in deciding what is acceptable or unacceptable student achievement (Dickson, 1993). Faculty seek to protect their autonomy in decision making (Floyd, 1986), especially at the course level of what constitutes an acceptable learning experience.

The department chair has a most important role in determining how change occurs. "What has happened now is the politicization of all departmental issues such that everything passes through an appropriate ideological filter" (Massy, Wilger & Colbeck, 1994, p. 3). There has been little research that has focused on the role of the department chair in promoting change.

Many adults commonly think of learning in terms of successful experiences and not by the learning acquired from the experiences. Faculty do not necessarily see the value of experiential learning. Many of the barriers in implementing PLA systems have to do with the way in which faculty have been socialized to view themselves.

> Faculty in general . . . have entered the academic professions with a traditional education in which most learning was accomplished in a classroom setting, during prescribed time periods, under the direction of professors, and under the auspices of conventional institutions of higher education. At some conscious or subliminal level many of us associate college-level learning with the actual time spent at college or university as much as we do with the specific knowledge and skills that are the desired outcomes of that time. (Ambash, 1994, p. 27).

Barriers are set requiring students to demonstrate their learning in ways not expected of students in a classroom. She goes on to say:

> While most of us know people whose education was not achieved by the traditional route, we often tend to think of such individuals as exceptional or unique. They are often expected to demonstrate a level of competence that is not only equivalent to that of college-trained people but clearly superior in order to be accorded the credentials and career opportunities available to those who display traditional college transcripts. (Ambash, 1994, p. 27)

Many disciplines (including the hard sciences) embrace the notion that objective measurement is the best way to inquire about learning (Peters, 1994, p. 6). Much of the faculty objection to prior learning assessment in the hard sciences appears to come from refusal to acknowledge a narrative flow of evidence which is an essential part of the portfolio method of assessing prior learning (Peters, 1994, p.6).

However, the opposition is more broad than this. PLA requires that outcomes be stated in terms of learner competencies. Since there is little general consensus on the outcomes of courses, even within the hard sciences, there can be little consensus on evaluation. Much of the resistance toward PLA has come from mathematics faculty (Simosko, 1988). On the surface, it would appear mathematics is very outcomes based; it should be possible to measure learning on the basis of examination. Yet objections from mathematics faculty towards PLA are often heard. These objections appear to be based on a belief that course challenge examinations cannot evaluate the student's appreciation of mathematics; something that mathematics faculty believe is acquired in their courses, even if not tested since course outlines do not seem to mention an appreciation of mathematics as an objective (Simosko, 1988). Apparently students who master a mathematical subject on their own will be deemed wanting for not having "developed an appreciation," while students in a classroom are deemed to have developed this appreciation as a result of taking the course (Simosko, 1988; Peters, 1994).

Jenkins (1990) discusses some of the pressures existing within Canada (and North America as well) to give credit for continuing education. He suggests some sort of block credit could be awarded for completion of a particular continuing education program and notes course by course transfer is problematic because of the different lengths of courses. However, he states that even transfer between continuing education and the credit area within the same university is fraught with difficulty because of the turf wars that would ensue if the credit area recognized continuing education courses. They would then be placed in a competitive situation.

Swiczewicz (1990), in a study of the penetration of prior learning assessment at United States colleges and universities, found 90% of institutions said they had prior learning assessment programs in place. However, only 35% could be considered to have active programs (awarding more than 200 credits per year). The resistance was greater at those institutions which perceived themselves as having higher status and which had few programs for nontraditional students.

Strategies for Managing Innovation

There are strategies for managing change within higher education. Many writers (Lippitt, 1981; Lippitt, Langseth & Mossop, 1986; Mohrman, Mohran, Ledford, Cummings, & Lawler, 1989; French & Bell, 1990; Coughlan, 1992; Agryris, 1993, Armenakis, Harris & Mossholder, 1993; Fiorelli & Margolis, 1993) discuss planned change within the organization and how to deal with resistance. Other writers (Levine, 1980; Baldridge & Deal, 1983; Floyd, 1986; Easterby-Smith, 1987; Hoyle, 1988; Seymour, 1988; Levine, 1989; Turner, 1990; Hall, 1991; Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Bergquist, 1993; Simsek & Louis, 1994) write about strategies for managing change specifically within educational institutions.

It has been suggested that by distinguishing between strong and weak forces of change, strong and weak forces of resistance and the balance between them, different change paths can be identified by the promoters of change (Strebel, 1994). Hall (1991) suggests strategies for implementing any reform in the educational arena are dependent, to a considerable degree, upon societal forces pushing for change. He believes much of the thrust for change comes primarily from the external environment and that is what makes it so problematic. Educational institutions, according to Hall (1991) are set up to be deliberately resistant to change, especially when it is seen to be the result of external demands.

Leadership is for change is essential. Two writers (Levine, 1980; Hall, 1991) suggest the role of leadership within educational institutions is to promote change and increase the acceptability of the change. Some writers (Levine, 1980; Seymour, 1988; Hall, 1991) discuss practical prescriptions that will enable educational managers to make changes. These include (a) framing the innovation clearly, (b) creating and maintaining a climate for innovation, (c) keeping in mind that timing is everything, (d) carefully analyzing the ways in which different constituencies will approach the innovation, (e) selecting strong leaders who have credibility with colleagues and good organizational skills, (f) acknowledging publicly the efforts of those who implement new programs, (g) never forgetting the primacy of faculty in implementing innovations, (h) taking care to involve faculty from several disciplines, (i) remembering that small can be a real advantage in innovation, and (j) guarding against increasing fragmentation.

Seymour (1988) notes members of an organization who must adopt or concur with an innovation will resist it unless they have been involved in formulating the innovation in the first place. Academic institutions can be described as "loosely coupled" and allegiance is to the discipline not the institution (Seymour 1988; Becher 1989). Most academic institutions are deliberately structured to resist precipitant change. The various review committees within the academic institution serve to contribute to diffusion of authority. As the core of a decentralized, informalized, complex organization, the academic department unit has the potential to initiate innovation. But it does not ensure innovation (Seymour, 1988, p. 12). Increasing specialization does not take advantage of the fact that many innovations occur on the boundaries of disciplines (Seymour, 1988; Becher, 1989).

Summary

The literature on innovation suggests changes perceived as evolutionary will be embraced faster than change perceived as revolutionary. Those changes compatible with existing value and belief structures of individuals will be accepted more willingly. Both the culture and structure of the organization play a role in the acceptance of innovation. Higher education, in general, has been resistant to change. Change promoted externally tends to be rejected as not suitable for the situation.

Higher education is in a period of rapid flux. The nature of students and the demands of the workplace are changing. PLA is one way educational institutions can cope with these demands. Nontraditional students are placing demands on institutions of higher education. There are lessons to be learned from institutional attempts to implement technological innovations that can assist in the understanding of the barriers faced by PLA.

The historical development of PLA was explored with an emphasis on understanding of the current situation. The development of PLA, both in the United States and Canada, was discussed particularly in terms of the Canadian situation. There are many barriers to implementation of a PLA system in Canada, not the least of which is the failure of universities to acknowledge PLA. Finally, a review of strategies for introducing and managing innovation was conducted. This review suggests the need for leadership, particularly at the senior management level, and implies the unit of change must be involved (i.e., the department and faculty) if change is to succeed.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

This study combined both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Cohen and Manion (1989) suggest using a triangulation approach yields a more complete understanding of a phenomena. Triangulation, or the combining of two or more methodologies, leads to a greater understanding of the area under study and greater depth and richness of the study. Using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods yields a greater understanding when the variables under study are complex.

The quantitative method employed (survey) allowed for exploration of attitudes and values towards prior learning assessment and innovation on a large scale (Schumacher & McMillan, 1993). Use of content analysis (policy and minutes), structured interviews, and case study methodologies, provided an understanding of the acceptance/resistance to change and the meaning of change to the individual (a phenomenological approach). Multiple methods of data collection and analysis assisted in the formulation of the relationships between demographic, experience, and educational variables with attitudes towards learning and acceptance of change. Patton (1987) suggests case study methodologies are particularly useful in understanding why some programs and individuals are unusually successful or unsuccessful.

Methodologies

Case Studies

Case study methodologies are described by Cohen and Manion (1989), Yin (1989), and Patton (1987) as empirical inquiries that investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident. Case studies are noted for their use of multiple sources of evidence.

Case study methodologies are considered most appropriate when the issue under consideration is "how and why" and the interconnection of propositions with theory. Yin (1989) describes pattern matching, using several pieces of information about the same case relating to some theoretical proposition, as being difficult to do but leading to greater richness of data (p. 33). A single case study is used where the case represents an extreme or unique case or where it represents a critical case in testing a well-formulated theory.

There are six sources of evidence commonly used in case studies. These include (a) documentation, (b) archival records, (c) interviews, mostly open ended or focused, (d) direct observation of the topic being considered, (e) participant observation, and (f) examination of physical artifacts. This study made use of the all, except the last.

Three principles of data collection are suggested by experts. These include (a) the use of multiple sources of evidence, (b) the creation of a case study data base including information such as notes, documents, transcripts, and narratives, and (c) the maintenance of a chain of evidence. Ability to replicate the study increases construct validity.

Cohen and Manion (1989) suggest since "the world is subjectively structured, possessing particular means for its inhabitants" (p. 128), case studies yield a depth of richness. However, they are not without their limitations. The issues of internal and external validity are examples. Use of appropriate sampling techniques for the case study assist with the issue of external validity and use of formative committees to review the criteria and interview schedule assist with the issue of internal validity.

It is suggested case studies use the following format:

> (1) A rough definition of the phenomena is formulated. (2) A hypothetical explanation of that phenomena is formulated. (3) One case is studied in the light of the hypothesis, with the object of determining whether or not the hypothesis fits the facts in that case. (4) If the hypothesis does not fit the facts, either the hypothesis is reformulated or the phenomena to be explained is redefined so that the case is excluded. (5) Practical certainty may be attained after a small number of cases has been examined, but the discovery of negative cases disproves the explanation and requires a reformulation of the original hypothesis. (6) The procedure of examining cases, redefining the phenomena and reformulating the hypothesis is continued until a universal relationship is established. (Cohen & Manion, 1989, p. 130)

Among the issues confronting the researcher at the start of case study research methodologies needing to be addressed are (a) possible researcher bias, (b) location of a site for the case study, (c) identification of key informants, (d) creation of a context in which the researcher can be both participant and observer, (e) the recording of data, (f) the categorization of data, and (g) the analysis of data. Also of interest is the question of verifying the accuracy of the data obtained through interviews. It is suggested, wherever possible, informants be given an opportunity to review the transcripts and interpretation of their interviews.

Case studies allow for generalizations about an instance or from an instance to a class. Their strength lies in their attention to the subtlety and complexity of the case in its own right. Case studies allow for the phenomenological reality of their respondents. Case studies can allow for different viewpoints of informants and can accommodate different theoretical models.

Case studies can form the basis of action oriented research. The insights gained from case studies may be directly interpreted and put to use. The results can be used directly for staff or individual self development, for formative evaluation, and educational policy creation.

Case studies often present the research data in a form that is more accessible than other kinds of research reports. The case study is capable of serving multiple audiences. Case studies may reduce the dependence of the reader upon wading through multiple pages of statistics. "Case studies, therefore, may contribute towards the 'democraticization' of decision making (and knowledge itself). At their best, they allow the reader to judge the implications of a study for himself [sic]" (Adelman, Jenkins, & Kemmis, 1980, p. 150).

Triangulation

According to Yin (1989), if survey and interview techniques are used together then a smaller pool of subjects can be interviewed and the larger pool surveyed. He notes "answers can be compared for consistency, but the case study can allow some insight into the casual processes, whereas the survey can provide some indication of the prevalence of a phenomenon" (p. 90).

Cohen and Manion (1989) and Yin (1989) define triangulation as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour. Triangulation makes use of both quantitative and qualitative data. The more the methods contrast with each other, the greater the confidence investigators can have in their findings. If the outcomes of a questionnaire survey correspond to those of indepth interviews with informants, the researcher can be more confident about the findings.

Cohen and Manion (1989) suggest theoretical triangulation or the testing of alternative or competing theories is preferable to utilizing only one theoretical model. They also discuss methodological triangulation as using the same method on different occasions or different methods on the same subject of study (p. 272). In this MARP, methodological triangulation was utilized as results of the survey were integrated with the indepth interviews and content analysis.

Survey Research

Cohen and Manion (1989) suggest surveys can be used to gather data at a particular point in time with the intent to

(a) describe the nature of existing conditions, (b) identify standards against which existing conditions can be compared, or (c) determine the relationships that exist between specific events (p. 97). Typically, surveys include structured or semi-structured interviews, self completed or postal questionnaires, standardized tests of attainment or performance, and attitudinal scales.

The type of survey instrument selected depends on the purpose of the inquiry, the population on which it is to focus, and on the resources available for the survey. Issues of sample population need to be considered as does the clarity of wording of items and the validity of the items themselves. In order to generalize the findings of survey research, attention needs to be paid to the wording of items to eliminate ambiguity. Measures need to be in place allowing for follow-up of non-respondents to increase the return rate. A cover letter explaining the purpose of the research needs to accompany the survey and several writers suggest the use of incentives to increase cooperation.

Surveying the total population, rather than a sample, may help ensure the research population is representative of the total population. It is typical that non-respondents to a survey may be different in some fashion from those who respond. These considerations are important in determining if the survey results from a sample can be generalized to a population.

Jaeger (1988) suggests survey research be used where the purpose is to describe the specific characteristics of a large group of persons, objects, or institutions. A series of specific procedural steps are followed in conducting survey research. First, the target population needs to be identified. A literature review should be undertaken. The survey method needs to be selected, and sampling frames identified. The survey instrument needs to be constructed, and the sampling plan defined. Plans for the design of field procedures, the reduction and editing of data, and analysis of data have to be created. The instrument needs to be piloted, revised, and implemented. The ability to generalize from a survey will be dependent upon the construct validity of the questions (the degree to which the question actually measures what is intended). The assumptions the researcher is making need to be identified, including the notion that the respondents' understanding of the question is consistent with the researcher's intent (p. 327).

Pilot studies (Yin, 1989, p. 59) may reveal inadequacies in initial design. What was thought to be unique may not be. The pilot results may prompt modifications in design. To avoid problems of validity and reliability, survey instruments should be pretested and reviewed by panels of experts before they are used.

Qualitative Methods

As described by several writers (Patton, 1987; Cohen & Manion, 1989; Yin, 1989), qualitative methods provide for a richness of data generally not present with quantitative methods. Specifically, the use of qualitative methods allows for the use of a phenomenological approach, defined by Cohen and Manion as "a theoretical point of view that advocates the study of direct experience taken at face value and one that sees behaviour as determined by the phenomena of experience rather than by external, objective, and physically described reality" (p. 31). The use of a phenomenological approach is concerned with how people make sense of and order their environment.

One criticism of qualitative methods is that investigators may impose their definitions of the meaning of events upon the participants who are interviewed. There is the risk subjective reports can be incomplete and sometimes misleading since these methods require a higher level of researcher skill and expertise not as crucial in quantitative research approaches.

Qualitative research allows for the interpretation of data, a focus on the individual, and small scale. The focus can be on investigating the "taken for granted," and interpreting the specific. In doing qualitative research, an attempt is made to understand actions and meanings of individuals rather than looking for causation of behaviour. The inclusion of micro-concepts of personal constructs, negotiated meanings, and individual definitions of situations allows for a richness of meaning not available through quantitative methodologies. This MARP, through indepth interviews of students and faculty, explored the understanding of the meaning of PLA to the individual and how it directly affected their experience.

Action Research

Action research has been defined by Cohen and Manion (1989) as "small scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examination of the effects of such intervention" (p.

217). Action research tends to be concerned with working with a problem in a specific context and attempting to solve it in that context. Usually participatory in nature, the approaches may be collaborative as well. The ultimate objective of action research is to improve practice in some way or other.

There is a distinction, however, between action and applied research. Cohen and Manion (1989) state applied research is mainly concerned with establishing relationships and testing theories, while action research interprets the scientific method more loosely, chiefly because its focus is a specific problem in a specific setting. "The emphasis is not so much on obtaining generalizable scientific knowledge as on precise knowledge for a particular situation and purpose" (p. 218).

Since the purpose of this MARP was to explore the process of innovation and change for faculty at UCFV as a precursor to the creation of an articulation program for private postsecondary institutions, this project could be considered a form of action research. Action research is frequently used in examining organizational change, the impact of planning and policy making, and the ways innovation and change are implemented in ongoing systems.

Interviews

Interviews can be formal or informal, directive or non-directive, focused or unstructured. In general, focused interviews seek respondents' subjective responses to known situations where they have first-hand or direct knowledge. Structured interviews can be either fixed alternatives, open ended, or allow for scale items, depending on the type of information desired. Open ended interviews can be thought of as a funnel starting with broad questions and then narrowing down to more specific ones. Unstructured interviews are more compatible with case study protocols and allow the respondent freedom to give their own answer as they choose rather than being constrained by a fixed alternative.

There are some concerns with using interviews as the sole source of data. Questions of face validity (i.e., do the questions measure what they claim to measure) need to be addressed. This MARP incorporated focused interview techniques with persons selected by the interviewer because of their knowledge (or lack of knowledge) in the area, because of their relative positional power in decision making, or because they were opinion leaders.

Through content analysis and analysis of the survey data, elements in the situation under investigation, identified as significant and worthy of further exploration, formed the basis of the interview schedule. A set of questions relating to the meaning and effects of the specific elements under investigation was then formulated. Using this analysis as a tool, an interview guide identifying the major areas of enquiry was created. The actual interviews focused on the subjective experiences and understandings of the respondents.

Procedures

Introduction

There were three sets of research questions posed for this project. The first set of questions was "Which factors can be identified as critical for the acceptance of educational change? In particular, which factors are critical for the acceptance of the idea of prior learning?" The second set of questions included "How is the acceptance of innovation related to the nature of the innovation itself?" "How can a model of diffusion of innovation explain the level of acceptance of PLA at UCFV?" The third research question was "What recommendations can be made that will enhance the future acceptability of an articulation model for private postsecondary training institutions?"

Factors Critical for Acceptance of Change

To identify the factors critical for the acceptance of educational change at UCFV and to develop an understanding of how a model of diffusion of innovation can explain the level of acceptance of PLA at UCFV, there were two phases in the project research. First, theoretical information on change theory, diffusion of innovation, and the current status of prior learning assessment at UCFV and British Columbia was gathered. This information was used in the second phase, which was the design, administration, and analysis of a survey of all UCFV faculty and administrators and indepth interviews of selected UCFV faculty, administration, and students. The outcomes of the first and second phases was analyzed as a basis for the third phase. The third phase was a force field analysis of the factors both inhibiting and promoting change at UCFV needing to be considered to create a series of recommendations UCFV could implement to create a system of articulation with private postsecondary institutions.

Information Gathering

Information on the current status of PLA at UCFV and British Columbia was obtained from the following sources: (a) a review of the literature on PLA, (b) a content analysis of all existing internal and provincial documents, (c) attendance at the provincial PLA Practitioners' Working Group and UCFV PLA Working Group, (d) a review of the minutes of both groups, and (e) meetings with PLA experts.

Development of the Faculty and Administration PLA Survey

Based upon the literature search, interviews with experts in the field, content analysis of documents, and the researcher's knowledge of PLA practices, a list of potential topics to be examined in the survey was developed. This list, along with suggested criteria concerning the format and structure of a survey instrument, was proposed as criteria for the survey.

Validation of survey criteria. The list of topics and format and structure criteria were reviewed by a panel of experts in PLA and survey research. Feedback from the review was obtained either through electronic mail or personal meetings with the informants. The initial reviews suggested some changes. The changes were made, the revised topics and criteria recirculated to the panel. Consensus was reached that the topics and format were acceptable.

The development and validation of the survey instrument. A survey instrument was drafted to address the established criteria. The draft instrument was reviewed by the review panel, including individuals with expertise in both PLA and survey research.

To ensure the survey could be considered both reliable and valid, a review process and pretesting was undertaken. A panel of persons with expertise in survey research was formed. This panel reviewed the draft of the instrument and suggested changes in wording and organization. The panel of experts that reviewed the list of topics also reviewed the draft instrument. Based on the input of both panels, the questionnaire was revised and modified. Two rounds were necessary before both panels thought the instrument had an acceptable degree of reliability and validity.

It was determined that pretesting of the instrument should be conducted to ascertain reactions of faculty to the format and content of the questions. The revised draft of the instrument was pretested with faculty from the Child, Family, and Community Services department (CFCS) at Douglas College. The information obtained from the pretest (including the completed pretest surveys) were circulated to the panels once again. The survey instrument, after pretesting and review by both panels, was considered to be a valid and reliable instrument.

Administration of the survey. Susan Witter (the Dean who has been identified with promoting the PLA effort at UCFV and in British Columbia) agreed to send out the cover letter for the survey under her signature. The researcher developed the cover letter, it was reviewed by Ms. Witter who suggested some changes in wording, and then typed for her signature (see Appendix E for the cover letter).

Since the number of UCFV faculty and administrators is fewer than 500, a sample was not drawn for this survey. The rationale for using a total sample was the concern, for those areas where faculty are few in number, a random sample might have excluded some areas. Not having some departments represented in a random sample could have compromised the validity of the survey results.

A list of all full-time permanent faculty and administrators was procured from the Dean of Human Resources. Each survey (see Appendix D) was coded, identifying the respondent, in order to be able to send a follow-up to non-respondents. An additional request (and survey instrument) was sent out to non-respondents, two weeks after the first survey, along with a cover letter from the researcher (see Appendix E).

Fowler (1993) suggests for a survey of this kind, where individuals have an interest in the subject matter and where literacy is not a problem, a return rate of 40 to 60% is usual. A response rate in this range was established as desirable.

Since information was available on gender, length of service at UCFV, occupational status, and departmental affiliation of the entire population, it was appropriate to use these variables to determine the degree to which the respondents were representative of the total population and to compare the characteristics of the respondents and non-respondents.

Data analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to describe and compare the demographic profile of the UCFV faculty and administrative staff (for example, age, gender, length of service) for both respondents and non-respondents. Descriptive statistics were also used to describe other variables. Cross tabulations were used to consider the relationship(s) between demographic variables and attitudes towards PLA.

The data obtained from the survey were utilized, along with other information from the literature review, content analysis of documents, and minutes of meetings, to develop the focus of indepth interviews of selected faculty, administrators, and students. These indepth interviews were designed to explore PLA attitudes and experiences.

Indepth Faculty Interviews

In order to further amplify the information gleaned from the survey results, indepth interviews of faculty, administrators, and students were undertaken. The data gleaned from these interviews were used to conduct an analysis and provide understanding of how the acceptance of an innovation is related to the nature of the innovation and how a model of diffusion of innovation can explain the level of acceptance of PLA at UCFV.

Development and validation of the faculty and administrator interview schedule. The preliminary analysis of the survey results, integrated with the information gathering process and meetings with experts, formed the basis of a list of topics to be explored in the indepth interviews. A panel of experts reviewed this list and suggested additional topics, which were incorporated and recirculated to the panel for their reaction. This listing became the criteria for the interview schedule to be developed.

An interview schedule was devised and circulated to the panel. No changes were suggested. The interview schedule was pretested with a small group of faculty (who were not interviewed later). This stage assisted in ensuring the proposed questions addressed the agreed upon topics and the interviewer's probing strategies were likely to produce the desired results. The results of the pretest were reviewed by the panel. Based upon this review by the panel, the interview schedule was revised and modified, increasing the construct validity of the schedule. The interview schedule is available as Appendix H.

Conducting the faculty interviews. Four administrators and nine faculty were selected for interviews by the researcher because of their position within the organization and their willingness to participate. All respondents allowed their interviews to be taped and the interviews were transcribed by the researcher as verbatim transcripts.

Data analysis. The information obtained from these interviews were reviewed and a narrative description was written to summarize the contents. As well, the data gleaned from these interviews were used to amplify and illustrate the survey results. This integration of qualitative with quantitative data yielded additional information about the process of acceptance of change and the barriers to implementation of PLA at UCFV.

Indepth Student Interviews

Indepth student interviews were conducted with a sample of students who either had requested or were in the process of requesting credit for prior learning at UCFV. The purpose of these interviews was to obtain information on student experience with PLA in order to develop an understanding of barriers faced by students attempting to get PLA credit.

Development and validation of the student interview schedule. Analysis of the survey results, the faculty interviews, and the literature review, suggested topics that could be explored in student interviews. The list of topics was reviewed by Chelene Koenig (the PLA Facilitator). Following the review, an interview schedule was drafted based on the topic list.

The interview schedule was reviewed by a panel. It was pretested with a small group of students who were not included in the sample population. Based upon this pretest, the schedule was revised and modified as appropriate and reviewed by the panel. This served to increase the construct validity of the instrument.

Conducting the student interviews. Students who had PLA experience were identified by the PLA facilitator and asked if they would agree to participate in the interviews. The researcher contacted the students who agreed to participate and made appointments for the interviews. Permission for taping was given by all the informants and interviews were taped and transcribed.

Data analysis of the student interviews. Data from the student interviews was reviewed, analyzed, and integrated with data from the survey and interviews.

Analysis and Synthesis

Data from the student interviews were considered along with the survey data and results of the faculty and administrator interviews. Multiple methods of analysis (triangulation) were used to develop an understanding of attitudes towards PLA and educational change that would not have been possible with only one method of inquiry.

The purpose of the analysis and synthesis was to provide an understanding of (a) the factors identified as critical for the acceptance of educational change, (b) the factors critical for the acceptance of the idea of prior learning, (c) the relationship between the nature of the innovation and the acceptance of it, and (d) how a model of diffusion of innovation can explain the level of acceptance of PLA at UCFV. The findings were used as a basis for the force field analysis and articulation model in the third phase of the project.

Development of an Articulation Process

Information Gathering

As part of the initial process of this stage of the research, a review and content analysis of minutes of meetings from the provincial Standing Committee on PLA, the UCFV PLA Working Committee, and the provincial PLA Practitioners' Group was undertaken. This expanded the review done in the first stage of the research and integrated material from experts and meetings that had occurred since September, 1995 (see Appendix F). Included in this review was an analysis of information gleaned from the researcher's participation in two of these committees and the National Forum on PLA.

Data from literature, the survey research, indepth interviews, content analysis of documents, observation of meetings, and interviews with PLA practitioners at UCFV formed the basis of a description of current PLA practices at UCFV. This description was reviewed by a panel of experts. Based upon their critical analysis, the summary was revised to accommodate their feedback.

Force Field Examination

This description of the current status of PLA, along with the findings of the research components of the study, formed the basis of an examination of the forces that both promote and inhibit change at UCFV in accepting PLA. Force field analysis (Lippitt, 1981) was used to organize the data. Force field methodologies allow data to be examined in terms of the forces that promote change as well as the forces that are resistant to change within the institution.

Force field examination identified those factors at UCFV needing to be taken into account if articulation with private postsecondary institutions is to be successful. The force field description was reviewed by a panel for accuracy and completeness.

Development of Recommendations

Based upon the force field description and the description and content analysis of current practices, a set of recommendations was prepared for UCFV. A panel reviewed the selection of topics suggested for inclusion in the report.

A draft report was written and circulated to the panel. Their comments and feedback were integrated into the final report which is included in the MARP as Appendix J, A Suggested Articulation Process for Private Postsecondary Institutions and UCFV.

Assumptions

The first assumption was that Rogers' categories of adopters of change are valid for the population at UCFV. A further assumption was that faculty could be categorized in terms of acceptance of innovation in one of Roger's five categories. Methodologically, it was assumed triangulation methods could yielded greater depths of understanding of complex phenomena than single methods.

It was also assumed faculty lists obtained from Human Resources were accurate and up to date. It was assumed opinion leaders at UCFV could be accurately identified and people in teaching and administrative roles at UCFV had both knowledge and opinions about PLA and would be willing to discuss them. It was also assumed students who had been successful and unsuccessful at PLA could be identified, their success or non-success was not due to personal characteristics, and they would be willing to participate in the research.

It was presumed UCFV is interested in promoting PLA and reducing or eliminating barriers to PLA. Further, it was assumed UCFV is interested in pursuing a project to articulate private postsecondary training.

Limitations

A major limitation of this study was that it focused on one organization and thus may not be applicable to other institutions. The results of the research are not generalizable to faculty at other institutions either in British Columbia or North America. Since "it is virtually impossible to imagine any human behaviour that is not heavily mediated by the context in which it occurs" (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 61), the relative inability to generalize may not be a concern. As a university college, the site for this study provided the researcher with a specific population at a specific point in the college's evolution and the findings and recommendations of this study are specific to UCFV.

Despite assurances that survey replies would be kept confidential, they were coded to keep track of response rate. This may have had an effect on respondents' perceived view of anonymity and thus be a limitation to the study. The survey instrument developed may not have been reliable or valid.

Since respondents to the survey were not uniformly distributed among departments (some areas of UCFV were under-represented), the non-respondents may be different in identifiable ways (discussed in Chapter 4). This is a further limitation on the ability to generalize opinions from the survey results to the total UCFV population. As well, the data were self-reported and therefore subject to individual bias and perception. The researcher has been identified with prior learning assessment efforts both at UCFV and in the province and may have been vulnerable to possible bias in interpretation and analysis of the survey data.

In the interview situation, all of the administrators and faculty were well known to the researcher, who has had close working relationships with many of them for the past 17 years. This may have influenced these informants to respond in a way they wished to be perceived of by the researcher or they thought would be pleasing to the researcher. It may also be, since they knew their interviews were being taped and transcribed, they wished to have certain views presented and these views may not have presented their real beliefs. On the other hand, the researcher's close relationship with many of the respondents may have prompted a higher degree of frankness.

A further limitation was in the selection of faculty and administration for interviews. All instructional administrators (the four deans and acting president) were interviewed. Faculty were selected for interviews through consultation with Susan Witter and Chelene Koenig as well as through the survey responses. Thus, the sample was not representative of the faculty at large and, therefore, the results may not be generalizable to the larger group of faculty.

Student interviews may not have been representative of student experience with PLA in general. Difficulty was experienced in identifying students who were willing to be interviewed. While 20 students were contacted, only 6 were willing to be interviewed. Of those 6, 2 students either did not appear for interviews (multiple times) or called to say they were unavailable and reschedule (only to not make the appointment). The data suggest the students interviewed did not have a clear or coherent picture of how their experiences could be generalizable to other student experiences. Their experiences and perceptions of the PLA process were intensely personal.

The researcher in this study was a participant observer as she has been identified with PLA on both the provincial and national scene and this may have coloured respondent's replies. Interview data is always subject to the researcher's own perceptions and biases, which may have influenced how the data were interpreted, reported, and analyzed. Care was taken, however, to attempt to reduce bias whenever possible through the use of review panels.

Another limitation is the time frame for this research. Because of the pressures to implement (and reformulate) the UCFV PLA system, several stages of the research overlapped. This could be considered a limitation in the conceptualization of the project. As well, the nature of action research, with its emphasis on creating solutions to problems within the context of the problem, could be another limitation.

The last limitation is the validity of the report on articulation of private institutions with UCFV may have been compromised. The researcher was under some pressure to produce the report in a short time period and it is possible some desirable steps in the validation of the report may have been eliminated or collapsed.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

Introduction

Chapter four presents the analysis of the data collected to answer the research questions posed for this project. What factors can be identified as critical for faculty acceptance of educational change? In particular, which factors are critical for the acceptance of the idea of prior learning? How is the acceptance of innovation related to the nature of the innovation itself? How can a model of diffusion of innovation explain the level of acceptance of PLA at UCFV? What recommendations can be made that will enhance the future acceptability of an articulation model for private postsecondary training institutions?

To identify the factors critical for the acceptance of educational change at UCFV and to develop an understanding of how a model of diffusion of innovation can explain the level of acceptance of PLA at UCFV, there were two stages in the project research. First, theoretical information on change theory, diffusion of innovation, and the current status of prior learning assessment at UCFV and British Columbia was gathered.

This information was used in the second stage, which included the design, administration, and analysis of a survey of all UCFV faculty and administrators. Indepth interviews of selected UCFV faculty, administration, and students were also conducted in order to understand how the acceptance of innovation (PLA) is related to the nature of the innovation and how a model of diffusion can help explain the level of acceptance of PLA at UCFV.

The third stage was an analysis and synthesis of the information collected in the first two stages and an integration of the data with the theoretical basis for this project. This served as a basis for a description of the force field factors that both inhibit and drive change at UCFV. The force field summary, along with the synthesis of the second stage, served as the basis of a series of recommendations UCFV should consider if a system of articulation with private postsecondary institutions is to be implemented.

This chapter begins with presentation of the results of the information gathering stage, including a description of the current status of PLA at UCFV. This is followed by a section reporting on the outcomes of the procedural steps for the survey of PLA survey of faculty and administrators. Report and analysis of the data follows the procedural steps.

This is followed by a report on the outcomes of the indepth interviews of faculty, administrators, and students. The data from the first two phases are analyzed together to answer research questions one and two: What are the factors that can be identified as critical for the acceptance of educational change? In particular, which factors are critical for the acceptance of the idea of prior learning? How is the acceptance of innovation related to the nature of the innovation itself? And how can a model of diffusion of innovation explain the level of acceptance of PLA at UCFV?

Finally, the results of the force field analysis are presented as a means of answering the third research question: What recommendations can be made that will enhance the future acceptability of an articulation model for private postsecondary institutions? The outcomes of procedures used to develop the report are described.

Information Gathering

In order to inform the creation of a survey and interview schedule, information on the current status of PLA at UCFV and British Columbia was obtained from the following sources: (a) a review of the literature on PLA, (b) a content analysis of all existing internal and provincial documents, (c) attendance at the provincial PLA Practitioners' Working Group and UCFV PLA Working Group, (d) a review of the minutes of both groups, and (e) meetings with PLA experts.

Documents and minutes of meetings reviewed in this phase included the minutes of meetings of the Standing Committee on PLA (provincial), the PLA Practitioners' Group (provincial) and the UCFV PLA Working Group. Additional documents reviewed included funding proposals, the PLA Updates, memos from the Canadian Labour Force Development Board (CLFDB), minutes of a provincial PLA Visioning Group Workshop, correspondence from various sources, and several federal, provincial, and UCFV reports. Summaries of these are presented in Appendix F.

While much of this material formed the basis for survey of faculty and interviews, the actual process of information gathering was ongoing. New and emerging material was integrated into the study as it became available. Information on the current status of PLA at UCFV was also collected and informed the analysis of the survey and interview data.

Content Analysis

Documents were reviewed from federal, provincial, and college sources. A summary of these documents in provided in Appendix F.

Provincial Level

Prior learning assessment consists of much that is already well established within the system including transfer credit and course challenge. The province has a well articulated system between institutions providing for transfer credit. All of the institutions within the system also have challenge policies. What is new is the granting of credit through portfolio assisted means. With the exception of Douglas College, the actual number of PLA credits granted in British Columbia through portfolio assisted assessment are few.

An inventory of PLA activity conducted in December of 1994 indicates that of the 21 colleges, university colleges and institutes, and 5 universities in the system, 15 colleges and 2 universities reported they offered challenge mechanisms. A total of 189 challenge exams, with 174 being successful was reported by the two universities. The college, university college, and institutes, reported a total of 243 challenges with 203 as successful. The report noted the number of challenges is not necessarily distinguishable in student records due to vagaries of transcription.

Eight colleges offer portfolio assessment in one or more areas. Seven institutions use a course analogue model, others use a combination of analogue and elective credit. In the 12 months proceeding the report, a total of 27 portfolios were assessed by the eight colleges and 20 students were successful in getting PLA credit. Douglas College had the majority of these successful students.

Review of minutes of the provincial Standing Committee on PLA indicates much of the impetus for PLA was coming from the province. As well, these minutes indicated concerns with issues of transferability of PLA, transcription of PLA, and dealing with faculty resistance. Most of the early minutes indicated a belief that once PLA became established within the system, there would be a flood of applicants. Ten demonstration projects were funded. Later minutes note the anticipated flood of applicants never materialized. The minutes speculate that the process was not publicized, it was cumbersome, and it was not uniformly available nor uniformly embraced. The minutes indicate that while PLA was embraced at the college level, and by employers and the federal and provincial governments concerned with retraining of the workforce, it was not embraced by traditional universities.

The PLA Practitioners Working Group was organized in June, 1995. Review of the minutes indicate this committee has tended to focus around issues of communication between practitioners and a sharing of tips.

UCFV PLA Working Committee

Review of these minutes indicates people were members of this committee either because they were volunteers or had been designated by their departments (mostly in the applied areas of UCFV). Review of the minutes indicates the following issues were of concern to the committee: grading of portfolio assisted assessment credit, transcription issues, charging for PLA credits, remuneration for faculty assessors, training of faculty assessors, requiring students to take a portfolio development course, and lack of knowledge within UCFV about PLA initiatives.

In December, 1994, the minutes reported that of the 23 students who completed Ad Ed 300 (the initial time it was offered), only 8 were preparing to submit portfolios. By May, 1995, none of these had yet been assessed. By September of 1995, only 3 students had been successful in achieving PLA credit.

The minutes indicate faculty were seen, in general, as resistant to PLA. However, analysis of the minutes indicates the members of the PLA Working Group believe resistance was more a lack of knowledge of PLA than a resistance to the idea.

Other Documents

The conclusions, based on a survey done by Isabelle and Associates (1994) for Human Resources Development Canada, indicate most universities identified transfer issues as a particulary problematic area. Canadian universities, while reluctant to fully accept PLA, show some openness toward the concept. The minutes of the provincial Standing Committee on PLA echo this concern.

Summary of Issues Identified

Table 1 summarizes the issues identified through content analysis in terms of their source. Issues, significant to one group, were not significant, or as significant, to another group. In general, the Standing Committee on PLA tended to deal

Table 1

Issues Identified Through Content Analysis

	Source of Data					
Issue	SC	PLA	PG	UCFV	HRDC	MSTL
Funding of PLA	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y
Transcription	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Training of assessors	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
PLA & workplace	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y
Research needed	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y
Promoting PLA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
University approval	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Payment to assessors	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N
Portfolio courses	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N

Note. SC = PLA Standing Committee, PLA = Updates/Forums, PG = Practitioners Group, UCFV = PLA Working Group, HRDC = Federal government, MSTL = Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour, Y = Significant issue, N = Issue not significant to this group.

with policy issues affecting the whole system, while the UCFV Working Group dealt with issues of implementation at a specific institution. The concerns of the Practitioners Group tended to be training of assessors and use of portfolio assisted methods. Governmental concerns tended to focus on large system wide reform and the use of PLA in the workplace.

Current PLA Practices at UCFV

As part of the information gathering process, which would form the basis for creation of a survey instrument, information was gathered on the current status of PLA practices and activities at UCFV. PLA activities exist at UCFV but are found under different rubrics. It is difficult to get a clear picture of the total number of students involved in PLA (and the credits granted) because transcription of credit does not necessarily recognize the format of granting credit. As well, some forms of PLA (exemptions) do not involve granting credit and prerequisites are not noted on transcripts. The following is a description of the current practice of PLA at UCFV in terms of methodology.

Advanced Placement

Advanced placement (AP) is available for students who have taken advanced placement courses in high school and scored an appropriate grade on the exam. The university transfer areas (arts and science) generally recognize exams in English, History, Math, Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. A total of 12 students were given advanced placement during the 1994-95 year. Of these, 6 were given credit for a course, while the other 6 were able to use their AP scores as a substitute for a prerequisite (Sylvia Currie, Assistant Registrar, September 6, 1995).

Exemptions from Courses

Some applied programs at UCFV may grant exemptions as a waiver of one or more admission requirements. Most programs at UCFV require high school graduation. Some programs will grant admission on the basis of a General Equivalency Diploma (GED), but only if students bring with them other exemplary achievements. There are no available statistics for exemptions from courses.

Standardized Exams

Tests and exams, especially the standardized College Placement Test (CPT), are widely used for admission to the institution. Students who score above 65 on the CPT may be exempted from taking English 105; however, they will not be given credit for the course. All students who intend to take an English or Applied Communications course must take the CPT. There is also a math placement test that works in a similar fashion. Some areas, noticeably ABE, ESL, Office Administration, and Trades, do testing for placement purposes and may grant credit if appropriate. However, there are no statistics available for this practice.

The Aviation Diploma program requires possession of a private pilot's license for admission into the program. However, they do not give advanced placement or any kind of credit for this license.

Block Credit

Block credit is awarded by the Bachelor of Child and Youth Care, the Bachelor of Social Work, the Bachelor of Computing Information Systems, the Bachelor of Business Administration, and the Bachelor of Adult Education for certificates and diplomas awarded by public institutions (most notably the Open Learning Agency) and others, as deemed appropriate by the program. As well, the Early Childhood Department grants block credit towards the ECE Diploma for graduates of the ECE certificate from Langley College (a private postsecondary institution). Again, no statistics are available on the prevalence of these practices.

Course Challenge

There are a total of 104 courses which are on the official course challenge list at UCFV. These, however, are generally limited to lower level courses and practica. For course challenges, the student is usually required to write a challenge exam developed by the instructor of the particular course. For practicum challenges, the student is usually required to demonstrate their work experience has been the equivalent of that required in the practicum. The practice has been for the student to meet with the instructor of the course or practicum to determine whether the student has a basis on which to request a challenge. The student must register for a challenge section and write the exam or complete the assignments specified by the instructor to receive a grade for the course. Practicum challenge procedures are similar except that the student is usually required to document their work experience and then write a final assignment.

The official course challenge count for 1994-95 was 24 challenges requested with 20 being successful. Sylvia Currie, the Assistant Registrar, estimates that the actual number is much higher. Numbers are very difficult to ascertain because the practice has been for students wishing to pursue this option to register for the regular section of the course. They then make individual arrangements with the appropriate instructor. This has generally persisted because of workload issues; instructors who offer challenge are not compensated for their work and it has not been possible to count challenges as part of workload.

Transfer Credit

Many students receive transfer credit because they have completed programs/courses at other institutions within the provincial system which form part of the articulation system. The British Columbia Transfer Guide (published annually) directly indicates what course in another institution should receive credit for a course at UCFV. Only courses for which a student received a "C" or better are eligible for transfer. For students coming from institutions outside the formal articulation system or from other countries or other provinces, the department or program head generally makes decisions about the number of transfer credits awarded. This is usually based on review of student transcripts and course outlines. Over 200 students were successful in getting various amounts of transfer credit during the 1994-95 academic year.

Transfer Credit for Nonformal Education

There are several programs which will grant course equivalent transfer credit (on a course-by-course basis) for nonformal courses taken outside of the formal postsecondary system. These include Business Administration for accounting courses offered by the professional association; Early Childhood Education for courses offered through Family Day Care; Computer Information Systems for computing courses offered in the community, through continuing education, and by private trainers; and Adult Education for a variety of programs/courses offered in the community and through continuing education. However, there are no statistics available on this practice.

Portfolio Assisted Assessment

The Fine Arts, Fashion Design, Theatre, and Graphic Design programs require portfolios for admission. However, they do not grant credit or advanced placement as a result of the learning evidenced by the portfolio.

While there is a policy in place regarding gaining credit by portfolio assisted assessment, very few students have been successful in achieving PLA credit through this means. The current practice requires students to take a portfolio development course in which they develop a portfolio and match their learning to a course in the UCFV calendar.

While 60 students were enroled in Ad Ed 200/300 during the 1994-95 academic year, only 20 students prepared portfolios for submission. The remainder did not prepare portfolios. Twenty portfolios were actually submitted to departments for review and only 3 were successful in having their learning recognized. Three students are still involved in the assessment process and the remainder were either not successful or dropped out of the process.

Revisions of PLA Policy

The minutes of the PLA working Group indicate that there were two issues in the 1994 policy that were hampering PLA processes. The first was the requirement that students take a portfolio development course; students saw this as an unnecessary expenditure of time and money (tuition was $116.00). The second was that students could only request course analogue credit; much student learning simply did not have that precise a match. As a result, a new policy (see Appendix B) has been developed and is now before the various approval committees and boards. The new policy divides the old policy into two: A PLA policy and a Policy on Portfolio Assisted Assessment. Students will be encouraged, but not required, to take a portfolio development course and they can now request unassigned or elective credit in a program. The third change is that students may now prepare a comprehensive portfolio to be submitted to more than one department and for more than one course (see Appendix B).

The UCFV PLA Survey

Information gathered during the first stage was used in the second stage, which was the design, administration, and analysis of a survey of all UCFV faculty and administrators and indepth interviews of selected UCFV faculty, administration, and students. The survey and interviews were designed to gain an understanding of the factors critical for faculty acceptance of educational change and for the acceptance of prior learning. As well, the interview data were used to develop an understanding of how the acceptance of innovation is related to the nature of the innovation itself and how a model of diffusion of innovation can explain the level of acceptance of PLA at UCFV.

Development of the PLA Survey

Given that a search of the literature produced no instrument adaptable to the needs of this research, one was developed by the researcher. It had been hoped a scale of adoption of change, adaptable for use in this research, could be found in the literature. However, the scales reviewed were too general, had not been normed on this population, and were considered by a panel of research experts to be too unsophisticated for this population. Scales such as Rokeach Social Dogmatism scale and the Adorno Authoritarian scale were rejected for use in this research because it was thought, by the researcher and panels, their format and language would result in a low response rate by a traditional academic population.

Based upon information obtained from the literature search, interviews with experts in the field including Susan Simosko (former CAEL consultant and international PLA expert), Susan Witter (Dean of Access and Continuing Education at UCFV), Chelene Koenig (UCFV PLA Facilitator) and Alan Thomas (Ontario Institute for Studies in Higher Education), and content analysis of documents, as well as the researcher's knowledge of PLA practices, a list of potential variables to be examined in the survey was developed.

Variables for Examination

The list of topics included age, gender, length of service at UCFV, level of education (and year obtained), status at UCFV, departmental affiliation, affiliation or department, and the credentials offered by the department (if any). Additional items on the list included current educational activities, previous experience with nontraditional and/or experiential learning, exposure to knowledge of PLA, identification of PLA opinion leaders, attitudes towards PLA, implementation of PLA at UCFV, knowledge of PLA methodologies, personal and departmental level of support, and the degree of suitability of PLA for various areas and disciplines. Criteria developed for the format and structure of the survey included length of survey, readability, appropriateness of scales of measurement, and validity of questions.

Validation of Topics

The list of topics and format and structure criteria were reviewed by a panel of experts in PLA and survey research. The PLA expert panel consisted of Susan Witter, Susan Simosko, and Chelene Koenig. A panel on survey research methods was formed for feedback. This panel consisted of Yvon Dandurand, Darryl Plecas, and Doug King, all of whom have expertise in survey research. Feedback from the review was obtained either through electronic mail or personal meetings with the informants. The initial reviews suggested some additions, which were made, and the revised topics and criteria recirculated to the panel. Consensus was reached that the topics and format were acceptable.

Development and Validation of the Survey

A survey instrument was drafted to address the established criteria. The draft instrument was reviewed by the review panel, including individuals with expertise in both PLA and survey research.

Selection of Survey Criteria

Variables agreed upon by the panel included age, gender, length of service at UCFV (and year obtained), status at UCFV, departmental affiliation, area or departmental affiliation, and the credentials offered by the department (if any). Literature suggested there might be links between these particular variables and attitudes toward PLA.

As well, information was sought on respondents' current educational activities. As education has changed, it was thought that those who were currently involved in educational activities, in an era of increasingly nontraditional means, might have more positive attitudes towards PLA (itself a nontraditional form). Those who are products of nontraditional education might be more likely to embrace PLA.

The second group of variables to be examined included previous experience with nontraditional and/or experiential learning. This included past experience either in their personal experience as students or with current students at UCFV. As well, since there have been several PLA training sessions and manuals produced, it was considered desirable to see if respondents had been exposed to these materials and activities and if their experience was related to attitudes towards PLA.

The third set of variables to be examined were attitudes towards PLA, PLA implementation at UCFV, knowledge of PLA methodologies, and personal and departmental level of support. Since the content analysis of documents, as well as expert opinion, had indicated more resistance to PLA from the traditional university transfer areas (liberal arts and sciences), it was decided to seek more information about respondents' opinions of the suitability of PLA for upper versus lower level courses and for different disciplines/areas. Since one may agree with something in principle, and not in practice, the final variable identified was the degree to which the respondents thought their courses should be eligible for PLA procedures.

Since this was a case study and mostly descriptive, there were no formal hypotheses. Based on the literature and document analysis, however, there were several working constructs including (a) those who were early adopters of PLA would have had more positive experiences with PLA, (b) those from the applied areas would be more likely to view PLA positively, and (c) women would be more likely to view PLA positively than men.

Validation of Survey Criteria

The survey criteria were reviewed by experts in the field, including Susan Witter (Dean of Access and Continuing Education at UCFV), Susan Simosko (former CAEL consultant, international expert on PLA, and now advisor to the provincial PLA Standing

Committee), Alan Thomas (Ontario Institute for Studies in Higher Education), Kenneth E. Varcoe (MARP advisor), and Chelene Koenig (PLA Facilitator). This review was done either by electronic mail or through personal meetings with the reviewers.

The review panel thought some of these variables would be better investigated in qualitative interviews rather than the survey instrument. Feedback included suggestions to eliminate criteria that investigated the meaning of a credential and the perception of the source of impetus for PLA. A total of two rounds were conducted until there was agreement that the criteria were valid.

Development of the Survey Instrument

Based on the validated criteria, a draft of the survey instrument was created. Questions were written and a draft of the questionnaire was sent to two panels. One was the panel mentioned previously and the second panel consisted of individuals with expertise in survey research (Darryl Plecas, Yvon Dandurand, Doug King, and Kenneth E. Varcoe).

Validation of Survey Instrument

Based upon feedback that some of the questions were unclear and the scales not easy enough to use, the questionnaire was revised and re-circulated for further comment. Both panels suggested the inclusion of an open ended question which would allow respondents the freedom to add whatever else they thought might contribute to an understanding of PLA at UCFV.

The PLA panel had no further comment after the second draft, while the methodological panel made further suggestions for refinement including the desirability of including definitions of PLA in the questionnaire as the researcher might be presuming prior knowledge of the respondents. A third draft was created and circulated, and this became the survey instrument which was pretested in the next stage.

Pretesting of the instrument. The instrument was pretested with 22 members of the Child, Family, and Community Services department (CFCS) at Douglas College on September 25, 1995. The researcher attended a meeting of the division and distributed the questionnaire. Respondents were instructed to complete the survey and annotate, in the margins, any questions that were not clear. A total of 10 questionnaires were returned to the researcher. A review of the returned questionnaires indicated that none of the CFCS respondents had made any marginal comments other than the questionnaire was clear, straightforward, and appropriate. The only concern identified was that some of the categories (i.e., area of college) were not appropriate for Douglas College.

Final validation of the survey instrument. The information obtained from the pretest (including the completed pretest surveys) was circulated to the panels once again. The survey instrument, after pretesting and reviews by both panels, was considered to be valid and reliable (see Appendix D).

Administration of the Survey

A list of permanent and contract faculty (with the exception of sessionals) and administrators, employed as of September 1, 1995, was procured from the Dean of Human Resources. This list (after removal of people who were on leave) consisted of 236 people, with 13 people classified as administration and 223 as faculty.

Questionnaires were coded on the back in pencil and sent out the first week in October with a covering letter from Susan Witter (Dean of Access and Continuing Education) asking for participation (see Appendix E). Returned questionnaires were checked off against the master list. Respondents were also invited to sign their names to the questionnaire if they wanted to receive the results of the research, with approximately half of the respondents indicating interest.

A total of 67 (28.4%) questionnaires were returned in the first two weeks. Questionnaires, along with a cover letter from the researcher (Appendix E) were sent out to the non-respondents during the third week of October. This resulted in the return of an additional 51 (21.6%) questionnaires during the period through November 2, 1995, after which no questionnaires were received. The data analysis was then conducted on the 118 responses (50.0%) of the population of 236.

Comparison of Respondent and Population Parameters

Since non-respondents could be identified, this allowed for comparison with the respondents on several variables: gender, length of employment, status, affiliation area, and department/discipline. As described in Table 2, women comprise 52.1% (123) of UCFV faculty and administrative positions. However, (Table 2) women were more likely to respond to the survey (69, 58.5%) than were men (49, 41.5%).

Table 2

Gender Comparison of Respondents and Non Respondents

	Respondents		Non-Respondents		Total	
Gender	n	%	n	%	n	%
Male	49	41.5	64	54.2	113	47.9
Female	69	58.5	54	45.8	123	52.1
Total	118	50.0	118	50.0	236	100.0

Two hundred and three people (86.0%) at UCFV are classified as faculty (see Table 3). Thirty of the 203 faculty, 30 (12.7%) are classified as program or department heads. An additional 13 people (5.5%) are classified as non-teaching faculty (counsellors and librarians). Officially there are 13 people classified as administrators according to the official list provided by Human Resources. However, during the period of this study, the president was on leave of absence and thus there were only 12 (5.1%) classified as administrators. Eight people (3.4%) could not be classified (predominantly academic assistants and lab instructors).

Teaching faculty were less likely to be respondents to the survey; while program and department heads were more likely to respond. Non-teaching faculty (counsellors and librarians) were more likely to respond to the survey while administrators were less likely to respond to the survey.

Table 3

UCFV Employment Status

	Respondents		Non-Respondents		Total	
Employment Status	n	%	n	%	n	%
Teaching faculty	80	67.8	93	78.8	173	73.3
Program/Department head	22	18.6	8	6.8	30	12.7
Non-Teaching faculty	9	7.6	4	3.4	13	5.5
Administration	5	4.2	7	5.9	12	5.1
Other (lab instructors)	2	1.6	6	5.1	8	3.4
Total	118	50.0	118	50.0	236	100.0

As described in Table 4, faculty from the arts area of UCFV were more likely to be non-respondents to the survey, while faculty from science and technology were more likely to respond to the survey as were people from the educational support area. People from the applied areas and access and continuing education were as likely to be respondents as non-respondents.

Because information was available through records on departmental affiliation, it was possible to compare the departmental affiliations of respondents and non-respondents. This is reported in Appendix G. In the Arts area, no responses were received from Anthropology, Art History, Political Science, and Sociology, while the History, Philosophy, and English departments had response rates of less than 33%.

Table 4

UCFV Faculty/Administration Area Affiliation

	Respondents		Non-Respondents		Total	
Affiliation	n	%	n	%	n	%
Area of College						
Arts	19	16.1	31	26.3	50	21.2
Applied	31	26.3	31	26.3	62	26.3
Sci & Tech	39	33.1	29	24.6	68	28.8
Acc & CE	20	16.9	20	16.9	40	16.9
Ed Support	9	7.6	5	4.2	14	5.9
Unclassifiable	0	0.0	2	1.7	2	0.8
Total	118	50.0	118	50.0	236	100.0

In the applied areas, there was no response from the Graphics or Fine Arts departments. As well, response from Applied Communications and Office Administration was low. In the Science and Technology area, trades instructors are under represented in the respondent population (33.3% response) while mathematics also had a relatively low response (44.4%). Within the Access and Continuing Education area, adult basic education (ABE) had a lower response rate (33.3%) than the area average.

Because the researcher had access to data on the non-respondents it was possible to compare length of service at UCFV. Respondents had a mean of 7.9 years of employment. Fifty eight

(49.15) of the non-respondents had less than four years of employment at UCFV while only 39.8% of the respondents were in this category. Of the non-respondents, 9 (7.6%) had just started employment this year. In general, although the non-respondents had less employment with the college, these differences do not appear to bias the responses.

Women were more likely to respond to the survey than men. While women are 52.1% of the total population, the survey respondents were 58.5% female. Since teaching faculty comprise 73.3% of the population, and 67.8% of the respondents, the response data are less likely to be representative of their opinions. In addition, the response data may be biased towards the science and technology areas as their response rate was greater than 50%.

Survey Responses

Demographic Data

The first part of the survey asked for information on age, gender, years of employment, credentials obtained, and current involvement in an educational program. Respondents were also asked to indicate their status at UCFV, the department or program they are assigned to, the UCFV functional area of their department, and the credentials offered by their department.

The average age (*n* = 115) of the respondents was 44.5 (3 respondents did not answer). More than half the survey respondents were over 45 (see Table 5). None were more than 59 or less than 30.

Table 5

Respondents--Age Category Distribution

Age	Respondents n	 %
30-34	10	8.5
35-39	18	15.3
40-44	23	19.5
45-49	30	25.4
50-54	26	22.0
55-59	8	6.8
Unknown	3	2.5
Total	118	100.0

Respondents were asked to state the year they obtained professional employment at UCFV. The average length of employment at UCFV was 8.0 years, the median was 6 years, and the modal response was 3 years. Table 6 reports on the range, which was from 0 (just hired) to 21 years.

Forty seven (39.8%) of the respondents had four years or less of employment with UCFV. Seventy one (60.2%) of the survey respondents had been with the college for less than eight years and only 16 respondents (13.6%) could be considered long term employees (more than 16 years of employment).

Table 6

Respondents - Years Employed Category Distribution

	Respondents	
Years Employed	n	%
none, just employed	3	2.5
1 - 4	44	37.3
5 - 8	24	20.3
9 - 12	14	11.9
13 - 16	14	11.9
17 - 21	16	13.6
Unknown	3	2.5
Total	118	100.0

Respondents were asked to indicate the credentials they had achieved and the year they had obtained them. Some respondents indicated only the highest degree obtained. Many did not give the year but only indicated they had achieved the degree. Generally speaking the largest proportion (39.0%) of the respondents reported having masters' degrees. Table 7 reports the distribution of the highest level of education.

Respondents were asked if they were currently involved in an educational program and, if so, what kind. Twenty seven (22.9%) of the respondents indicated they currently were students in an educational program. Of those who indicated involvement in

Table 7

Respondent Level of Education

Highest Level Reported	Respondents	
	n	%
Diploma or Trades Qualification	3	2.5
Baccalaureate Degree	32	27.1
Masters' Degree	46	39.0
Doctoral Degree	37	31.4
Total	118	100.0

current education, 4 reported current enrolment in diploma level studies, 12 reported enrolment in a masters program, 5 reported enrolment in a doctoral program, and 9 reported involvement in continuing education activities. Three respondents reported involvement in more than one kind of activity.

Respondents were asked to indicate their status at UCFV by selecting among the choices of teaching faculty, program or department head, non-teaching faculty, administrative, and other. Respondents were asked to specify what "other" meant. As reported previously in Table 3, 80 (67.8%) of the respondents said they were teaching faculty. Twenty two (18.6%) of the respondents said they were program or department heads. Nine (7.6%) reported they were considered non-teaching faculty (librarians, continuing education programmers, and counsellors) and five (4.2%) classified themselves as administrators. Two respondents stated their classification as "other" (lab instructors).

Respondents were asked to indicate the UCFV area to which they were assigned. UCFV is divided into six functional areas, each headed by a dean. These areas include Arts, Applied Programs, Science and Technology (including trades/vocational), Access and Continuing Education (including Adult Basic Education [ABE]), International Education, and English as a Second Language (ESL), Educational Support Services (library and student services), and the Business office. Table 8 describes affiliation as self reported.

Responses were received from 19 out of 50 (38.0%) faculty in the Arts area; 31 out of 62 (50.0%) in the applied area, 39 of 68 (57.3%) in Science and Technology, 20 out of 40 (50.0%) in Access and Continuing Education, and 9 of 14 (64.3%) in Educational Support. No responses were received from the business office area (the Bursar and the Dean of Human Resources).

Thus, the survey responses are rated more heavily towards Science and Technology since they have the greatest number of faculty (39) and had a high response rate (57.4%) from the area. While Educational Support had a high response rate (64.3%), their actual numbers are small (14) and so do not unduly bias the survey responses. Arts faculty are under-represented in the sample with the lowest response rate (38.0%). The lack of response from the Business Office is not a concern since they have little, if any, involvement in instructional activities.

Table 8

Survey Responses by Functional Area

	Response	Pop	Response	Population	Survey
Functional Area	n	n	%	%	%
Arts	19	50	38.0	21.2	16.1
Applied	31	62	50.0	26.3	26.3
S & T	39	68	57.4	28.8	33.1
A & CE	20	40	50.0	16.9	16.9
Ed. Support	9	14	64.3	5.9	7.6
Business Office	0	2	0.0	0.8	0.0
Total	118	236	50.0	99.9	100.0

Note: Arts = Arts, Applied = Applied area, S & T = Science and Technology, A & CE = Access and Continuing Education, Ed. Support = Educational Support, Response = response rate as percentage of area affiliation, Population = percentage of total population in area, Survey = Response rate to survey as percentage of population in area.

Respondents were asked to indicate which credentials they thought were offered by their departments. Multiple responses were possible since many departments offer a range of credentials. Data are available in Appendix G. The data, however, is not reliable as inspection of the data reveals that many respondents, particularly in the arts area, were uncertain if their department offered any credential.

Experience with Forms of Prior Learning Assessment

The second part of the survey dealt with items pertaining to the respondents' experience with prior learning assessment, either in their own education or at UCFV. Questions were related to their personal experience with PLA and exposure to PLA.

Respondents were asked to indicate if any of their previous educational experience had involved gaining credit through transfer of credits, portfolio assessment, block credit, self directed study, standardized exams, or course challenge (see Table 9). Eighty two respondents (69.5%) reported they had

Table 9

Previous Utilization of PLA Methodologies in Own Education

Methodology n = 118	Frequency	%
Transfer credits	59	50.0
Self directed study	26	22.0
Standardized exam	27	22.9
Course challenge	14	11.9
Block transfer	16	13.6
Portfolio assisted assessment	5	4.2
PLA not used	36	30.5

received credit through prior learning assessment, while 36 (30.5%) of the respondents had not utilized any form of prior learning assessment.

The numbers in the table are not mutually exclusive; respondents were encouraged to check multiple responses if they applied. Fifty nine respondents (50.0%) reported transfer credits as the most common PLA methodology used in their own education. Five (4.2%) used portfolio assisted assessment, which was the least common methodology mentioned. An almost equal number reported having used self directed study and standardized exams.

Table 10 summarizes the number of different methodologies used by the respondents. Of those who had used PLA (n = 82, 69.5%), 41 (50.0%) had used two methods (one of which was most commonly transfer credit. Only one person had used five or more.

Table 10

Number of PLA Methodologies Utilized in Own Education

n = 82	Frequency	%
One method	23	28.0
Two methods	41	50.0
Three methods	14	17.1
Four methods	3	3.7
Five or more	1	1.2

The next series of questions focused on exposure to PLA. Respondents were asked (see Table 11) to indicate if they had attended any of the provincial PLA meetings or UCFV forums and read any of the provincial manuals available on PLA. Only 24 (20.3%) of the respondents had attended any of the provincial PLA

Table 11

Exposure to PLA Concepts and Methodologies

Exposure n = 118	N	%
Attendance at Provincial Meetings		
None	93	78.8
1	17	14.4
2	6	5.1
3 or more	1	0.8
Unknown	1	0.8
Attendance at UCFV Forums & Meetings		
None	81	68.6
1	19	16.1
2	12	10.2
3 or more	5	4.2
Unknown	1	0.8
Read PLA Manuals	32	27.1
Did not read PLA Manuals	86	72.9

meetings. Only 36 (30.5%) had attended any of the UCFV PLA meetings. Only 32 (27.1%) had read either of the PLA manuals.

The next set of questions asked respondents if they knew whether students in their department had been awarded PLA credit (and if so, to estimate how many) during the 1994-95 academic year.

Table 12

Perceived Level of Departmental Involvement in PLA

n = 118	Frequency	%
Departments awarded PLA credit		
Don't know	44	37.3
Yes	38	32.2
No	33	28.0
Missing	3	2.5
Estimates of Number of students involved		
None	2	1.7
Don't know number	8	6.8
Didn't answer (no students involved)	80	67.8
1 - 9	18	15.3
10-19	5	4.2
20-29	3	2.5
more than 30	2	1.7

Respondents were also asked if they had any personal involvement in awarding credit and what methodologies they used: including course challenges, standardized exams, advanced placement, portfolio assessment, transfer credits, and exemptions from courses.

Respondents were about equally mixed in whether or not their departments had granted any form of PLA credit in the past year. Of the 38 respondents (32.3%) who said they believed their departments had awarded PLA credit, 18 (15.3%) identified PLA credits being awarded to fewer than 10 students.

Respondents were asked if they had been personally involved in granting PLA credit to a student and, if so, what methodologies were used. Table 13 describes the type of involvement in granting credit through various PLA methodologies.

Forty five (38.1%) of the respondents indicated they had personally been involved in granting PLA credit to students in the past year. Most of this activity (29.3%) was through transfer credit with 27 respondents indicating this methodology. Eighteen of the 45 respondents (40.0%) mentioned granting credit through course challenge exams, and 6 (13.3%) identified credit for standardized exams. Twenty respondents of 45 (60) reported allowing exemption from required courses (but not necessarily granting credit for those courses) and 13 (29.9%) allowed advanced placement. Eight of the 45 respondents (17.8%) reported allowing portfolio assessment. Clearly transfer credits are well established as a form of PLA, with course challenge somewhat less.

Table 13

Personal Involvement in Granting PLA Credit

n = 118	N	%
Personally involved in granting PLA credit		
No	70	59.3
Unknown	3	2.5
Yes	45	38.1
Methodologies Used		% of Yes
Course Challenge	18	40.0
Standardized exam	6	13.3
Advanced Placement	13	28.9
Portfolio Assessment	8	17.8
Transfer Credits	27	60.0
Exemptions from Courses	20	44.4
Total Methodologies Used	92	

Note: Percentages under methodologies are percentage of those who said they had personal involvement in granting PLA credit.

The existence of advocates for a new practice or innovation is seen as a major factor that contributes to adoption and change. Accordingly, the survey respondents were asked to identify persons whom they considered to be leaders in the PLA movement on campus. An analysis of these results would provide information about the awareness levels of the respondents as well as confirm whether those who have been most active in PLA activities at UCFV are visible and known. These responses would assist in the identification of those perceived to be opinion leaders. Of the 118 respondents, less than two thirds were able to identify one or more persons perceived to be leaders in PLA Only 18 (15.3%) respondents could supply five names.

Table 14

Ability to Identify PLA Opinion Leaders at UCFV

Number Identified n = 118	Frequency	%	Cumulative (Identified) Frequency	Cumulative (Identified) %
None	43	36.4		
One	12	10.2	12	
Two	22	18.6	34	28.8
Three	16	13.6	50	42.4
Four	7	5.9	57	48.3
Five	18	15.3	75	63.6

Table 15 identifies the most commonly reported opinion leaders and the frequency with which they were named. Of the 75 respondents who were able to name at least one person, 72 (96.0%) named Susan Witter (Dean of Access and Continuing Education), while 51 (68.0%) named Chelene Koenig (the PLA facilitator).

Gloria Wolfson, the researcher, was named by 32 (42.7%) and Andrea Kastner, Adult Education program head by 22 (29.3%) respectively. Another 6 people were named by four or more persons but with much less frequency than the four mentioned previously.

Table 15

Identification of PLA Opinion Leaders

Name	n = 75	Frequency	% of Total
Susan Witter, Access & Continuing Education		72	96.0
Chelene Koenig, PLA Facilitator		51	68.0
Gloria Wolfson, Researcher		32	42.7
Andrea Kastner, Adult Education		22	29.3
Don Chapman, Adult Education		7	9.3
Paul Burkhardt, Applied Communications		4	5.3
Sylvia Currie, Assistant Registrar		4	5.3
Janet Falk, Business Administration		4	5.3
Wanda Gordon, Nursing		4	5.3
Wayne Welsh, Science & Technology		4	5.3

All the people named were either current or former members of the PLA working group. Four people are clearly seen as driving the PLA effort at UCFV: the Dean of Continuing Education and Access (who has been identified with PLA on a provincial level), the PLA facilitator, the researcher, and an adult education faculty member. Others are seen less frequently by the respondents as leaders in the prior learning assessment movement at UCFV. Inspection of the surveys indicates, with the exception of the people mentioned frequently, respondents tended to mention people who were in the same department and with whom they were in contact. Three members of the PLA working group were not mentioned at all by respondents.

Prior Learning Assessment Opinions and Knowledge

Two sets of scales were part of this section of the survey. The first set of items was concerned with awareness of policy, level of knowledge, and personal and departmental levels of support for PLA. Respondents were asked to rate themselves on a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being low and 10 being high. The second set of items asked respondents to consider, using a Likert type scale, several items relating to the implementation of PLA.

Personal level of awareness. Respondents were asked to rate (on a scale of 1 - 10, with 1 being completely unaware, 5 being moderately aware, and 10 being totally aware) their personal level of awareness of the UCFV policy on prior learning assessment. The mean rating for this item was 4.4. Eighty five people (72.0%) of the sample reported they would rate their level of awareness at 5 or less (on a 10 point scale). Tables 16 and 17 present the personal level of awareness of PLA policy.

Generally, there is not a high level of awareness of the PLA policy. Educational support services personnel report the highest awareness of the policy, while those in the arts area have the lowest level of awareness. Women rated themselves as

Table 16

Awareness, Knowledge, and Level of Support for PLA

	Low (1,2,3)		Medium (4,5,6,7)		High (8,9,10)		
Dimension	n	%	n	%	n	%	N
Awareness	56	47.5	46	39.0	16	13.6	118
Knowledge	65	55.1	43	36.4	10	8.5	118
Support	11	9.5	56	48.3	49	42.2	116
Discussion	52	45.6	51	44.7	11	9.6	114
Dept. Support	16	15.8	52	51.5	33	32.7	101

Note. Awareness = Personal level of awareness, Knowledge = Knowledge of PLA methodologies, Support = Personal level of support for PLA, Discussion = Amount of discussion at the department level, Dept. Support = Perceived level of departmental support for PLA

marginally more aware (mean of 4.6) than men (mean of 4.4). Fifty six (47.5%) respondents rated their level of awareness as low, while only 16 (13.6%) rated their level of awareness as high. More respondents rated their level of awareness as low (47.5%) than medium (39.0%).

Table 17

Means of Awareness, Knowledge, and Level of Support for PLA by UCFV Area

	Mean Ratings								
Dimension	Arts	App	S&T	CE	ESS	O	M	F	Total
Awareness	3.3	5.2	3.8	4.8	7.0	5.1	4.1	4.6	4.4
Knowledge	2.8	4.7	3.3	4.2	4.5	4.5	3.7	3.9	3.8
Support	5.2	7.2	6.3	7.9	9.0	8.3	6.2	7.2	6.8
Discussion	2.3	5.7	3.8	4.7	1.0	3.7	4.0	4.2	4.2
Dept. Support	4.1	6.3	5.3	7.4	0.0	7.3	5.7	6.2	6.0

Note. Arts = Arts area, App = Applied Areas, S&T = Science and Technology, CE = Access and Continuing Education, ESS = Educational Support Services, O = Other, M = Male, F = Female. Awareness = Personal level of awareness, Knowledge = Knowledge of PLA methodologies, Support = Personal level of support for PLA, Discussion = Amount of discussion at the department level, Dept. Support = Perceived level of departmental support for PLA

Knowledge of PLA methodologies. Respondents were asked to rate the level of their knowledge of PLA methodologies, using the same scale. The mean rating for this item was 3.8. Almost three quarters (74.5%) of the respondents saw themselves at the midpoint (5) or less.

The level of familiarity with PLA methodologies is generally low. There is virtually no difference in the mean ratings of men and women on this item. Faculty in the applied areas rate themselves much more knowledgeable about PLA methodologies (mean = 4.7) than do faculty in the arts area (mean = 2.8). Most respondents (65) rated themselves as low (55.1%) on this item. Forty three respondents (36.4%) rated themselves in the mid range of knowledge, and only 10 (8.5%) saw themselves as very knowledgeable. The lower rating of arts faculty on knowledge of PLA methodologies is consistent with their lower rating in awareness of the UCFV policy.

Personal level of support for PLA. When respondents were asked to rate (using the same scale) the level of their personal support for prior learning assessment activities at UCFV, a different picture emerged. Only 9.5% rated their support as low. The mean response on this item was 6.8. Response to this item demonstrated, on the whole, that respondents were supportive of PLA.

Women (mean = 7.2) were more likely than men (mean = 6.2) to be personally supportive of PLA. Faculty in the arts (mean = 5.2) and science and technology (mean = 6.3) were also less likely to be personally supportive of PLA. Student services (mean = 9.0) are the most likely to be personally supportive of PLA. Eleven respondents (9.5%) rated their support as low, while 56 (48.3%) rated their support as moderate, and 49 (41.2%) rated their support as high. Overall, most respondents to the survey were either moderately or highly supportive of PLA.

Level of departmental support for PLA. There were two questions used to measure level of departmental support. Respondents were asked to rate how often they thought PLA had been discussed in department meetings and to rate what they saw as the level of departmental support for PLA.

When asked to rate (on a scale of 1 - 10 with 1 being never and 10 being every meeting) how often PLA has been discussed in departmental meetings, almost 67% of the respondents rated this item at 5 or lower, or somewhere between rarely and occasionally. The mean for this item was 4.2. However, 21 (17.8%) gave this item a rating of 1.

PLA seems to make it onto the departmental agendas only rarely in the arts (mean = 2.3) and educational support areas (mean = 1.0). However, it appears to be on the agenda of the continuing education (mean = 4.7) and applied areas (mean = 5.7) more frequently. Fifty two respondents (45.7%) indicated that the item was infrequently discussed, while 51 (44.7%) indicated that it was discussed a moderate amount. Only 11 respondents (9.5%) indicated that PLA was frequently discussed at the departmental level (see Tables 16 and 17).

Respondents had some difficulty rating the level of departmental support for PLA. Seventeen (14.4%) respondents did not answer the question. Of those who did answer the question, the mean response was 6.0.

The perception of the level of departmental support is considerably higher in the applied (mean = 6.3) and continuing education (mean = 7.4) areas than for those in science and technology (mean = 5.3) and the arts (mean = 4.1). Again, as for the other variables, faculty from the arts area are far less likely to see a high level of departmental support for PLA. Women were more likely (mean = 6.2) than men (mean = 5.7) to perceive a higher level of departmental support, which is consistent with previous ratings. The majority of the respondents, 52 (51.5%) indicated they perceived departmental support for PLA to be mid-range, while 33 (32.7%) saw a high level of departmental support. However, 16 (15.8%) saw a low level of departmental support for PLA.

Opinions of suitability of PLA. The next set of items asked respondents to use a Likert type scale (with 5 being strongly agree and 1 being strongly disagree) to rate a number of statements on the suitability of PLA by level of course and type of course/program. The final question asked respondents to rate the degree to which they thought courses they taught should be available to students through PLA methodologies (see Table 18).

For the item "the amount of credit available through prior learning assessment should be linked to the length of the program," the mean rating was 3.2. Almost 30% (34, 29.6%) of the respondents gave this item a rating of 3 (neutral). However, almost 44% of the respondents agreed with the statement while approximately 27% disagreed. Thus, there is a general agreement that the amount of PLA credit available needs to be linked to the length of the program.

Table 18

Linkage of PLA Credit to Length of Program

Rating n = 115	#	%	
5 = Strongly Agree	8	7.0	
4 = Agree	42	36.5	
3 = Neutral	34	29.6	
2 = Disagree	25	21.7	
1 = Strongly Disagree	6	5.2	
Mean Rating			3.2

The next three items on the survey related to the links between PLA and levels of courses/programs. Generally respondents to the questionnaire saw PLA as suitable regardless of the level of the course/program. Table 19 provides a summary of respondents' opinions for three statements: PLA is suitable only for lower level courses/programs, PLA is suitable only for upper level courses/programs, and PLA is suitable regardless of the level of course/program.

The majority of respondents, 62.4%, believed PLA was suitable regardless of level. Only 19.0% believed PLA was suitable exclusively for lower level courses. A lesser percentage, 3.4%, of the respondents saw PLA suitable only for

Table 19

Beliefs About Suitability of PLA for Types of Courses/Programs, Disciplines

Suitability	SA %	A %	N %	D %	SD %	M	N
Only for lower level	4.3	14.7	14.7	48.3	18.1	2.4	116
Only for upper level	0.0	3.4	16.2	52.1	28.2	2.0	117
Regardless of level	23.1	39.3	19.7	12.0	6.0	3.6	117

Note. SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neutral, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

upper level courses. These items indicate the respondents did not, in general, believe PLA should be linked to the level of the course.

The next series of questions referred to the suitability of PLA for courses and programs in relationship to specific areas of the college (see Table 20). Respondents were generally not sure if PLA was suitable for all courses in all programs. Generally there was more disagreement (46.6%) than there was agreement (37.3%) on the suitability of PLA for all courses. In a related question on the suitability of PLA for some courses/programs, a different pattern emerges. When asked whether PLA was suitable for only some courses, programs, and disciplines, 42.2% of the

Table 20

Beliefs about Suitability of PLA for Types of Courses/Program/ Disciplines

Suitability	SA %	A %	N %	D %	SD %	M	N
All	12.7	24.6	16.1	34.7	11.9	2.9	118
Only some	6.9	35.3	15.5	29.3	12.9	2.9	116
Trades	12.9	66.4	18.1	0.9	1.7	3.9	116
Arts	12.0	63.2	19.7	3.4	1.7	3.8	117
Science	11.1	54.7	23.9	34.2	1.7	3.6	117
ABE	14.7	64.7	15.5	3.4	1.7	3.9	116
Applied	14.8	68.7	14.4	0.9	0.9	3.9	115

Note. SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neutral, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

respondents gave this a strongly agree or agree rating.

The applied areas were seen as most suitable for PLA, followed by trades/vocational and ABE. The traditional university transfer areas (arts and science) were seen as marginally less suitable for PLA. Most (79.3%) respondents believe PLA is suitable for trades and vocational programs. However, a slightly lesser percentage (75.2%) believe PLA is suitable for arts programs. Fewer respondents (65.8%) agree PLA is suitable for science. The highest number of respondents (83.5%) saw PLA as suitable for the applied areas.

The final question on the survey asked respondents to indicate the degree to which they saw PLA as suitable for courses they teach. As described in Table 21, 14 people left this item blank or noted they did not teach.

Table 21

Willingness to Grant PLA Credit for Courses Taught

Area	SA %	A %	N %	D %	SD %	N	%
Arts	11.1	50.0	5.6	11.1	22.2	18	17.3
Applied	13.3	60.0	23.3	0.0	3.3	30	28.8
S&T	13.2	44.7	18.4	13.2	10.5	38	36.5
A & CE	27.8	50.0	16.7	5.6	0.0	18	17.3
Total	15.4	51.0	17.3	7.7	8.7	104	100.0

Note. Arts = Arts area, Applied = Applied Areas, S&T = Science and Technology, A & CE = Access and Continuing Education, SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neutral, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

Faculty from the applied area were more likely (73.3%) to agree or strongly agree that courses they taught should be available for PLA while only 61.1% of faculty from the arts area had the same opinion. Continuing education and access faculty (predominantly in the ABE and ESL areas) were the most likely to view their courses as suitable for PLA--77.8% either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. These faculty had the highest percentage of respondents (27.8%) who strongly agreed with this statement. Arts (33.3%) and science and technology faculty (23.7%) were the most likely to disagree or strongly disagree with this statement.

Comments about PLA. Respondents were invited to offer any comments that would help the researcher develop an understanding of PLA at UCFV. Thirty one respondents (26.3%) offered comments. The data from the survey as well as these comments (see Appendix H) formed the basis for selecting issues to be explored further in the second phase of the research.

Nine respondents' comments indicate PLA is basically a good idea, while 7 respondents indicate reservations about PLA in general. Three respondents reported difficulties with PLA and their students, while 5 respondents presented critiques of particular PLA methodologies and its suitability for their disciplines. The most frequent comment (12 mentions) was participants did not know very much about PLA and they needed more training and higher levels of awareness.

Relationship Between Innovation and Acceptance of PLA

The second phase of the research involved indepth interviews of selected UCFV faculty, administrators, and students in order to develop an understanding of how the acceptance of an innovation is related to the nature of the innovation and how a model of diffusion of innovation can explain the level of acceptance of PLA at UCFV.

The indepth interviews would assist the researcher in developing an understanding of the phenomenological reality of PLA as experienced within the system. This understanding, along with the results of the survey research, would then serve as a basis for the analysis explicating how a model of diffusion explains the level of PLA acceptance.

Faculty and Administration Interviews

The survey results provided a rich source of information to identify and construct questions pertaining to concepts and issues that could be examined in greater depth. The purpose of the interviews, in the second stage, was to explore the relationship between resistance and PLA and to seek a greater understanding of PLA implementation processes at UCFV and the barriers faced by students who wished to access PLA.

In addition to the survey results, content analysis of minutes of various meetings produced a number of questions, concerns, and issues to be investigated through interviews. Some issues, considered relevant to explore, surfaced during various forums and meetings held in October (see Appendix F).

Creation of the Faculty Interview Schedule

A tentative list of areas to be explored further was developed. This included (a) individual understanding of PLA, (b) reservations and support, (c) barriers to implementation, (d) the meaning of education and the role of PLA in education, (e) the issue of faculty motivation and involvement in PLA,

(f) the relationship between the impetus for PLA and its implementation, (g) issues around grading of PLA and use of a course analogue model, (h) residency requirements and PLA, and (i) the role of administrative leadership in implementing PLA at UCFV.

A panel reviewed a draft of these topics and suggested specific wording. An interview schedule was drafted and reviewed by the panel through electronic mail and personal meetings. No revisions were made to the schedule.

After the draft of the schedule was prepared, it was pretested with a small group of faculty (who were not interviewed later). This step enabled the researcher to refine probing strategies and to ensure the questions were understood. The results of the pretest, which indicated the questions worked and the probes were appropriate in getting the desired information, were reviewed by the panel. The panel reacted favourably and agreed that the interview guide was ready for use (see Appendix H).

Conducting the faculty interviews. While the initial plan called for interviewing approximately ten faculty and administrators who had been identified through the survey instrument and knowledgeable peers as opinion leaders, this was modified as a result of the initial survey results. First, it was decided to interview all four senior instructional deans (one of whom had not responded to the survey). Two of the deans had been identified as opinion leaders in the survey. However, given the nature of academic decision making, it was believed by the review panel that all should be interviewed.

Second, the panel suggested a selection of department and program heads be interviewed, even if they had not been identified as opinion leaders, since PLA decision are made at the departmental level. A total of seven program/department heads were identified to be interviewed. Department/program heads (a position rotating every three years) at UCFV are also considered teaching faculty who get release time for administrative duties.

The researcher selected the program/department heads and faculty based on the responses to the survey and recommendations of Susan Witter and Chelene Koenig. It was decided to interview some faculty and department/program heads from departments (such as English, History, and Office Administration) with low response rates to the survey in order to develop further insights into the barriers PLA faces at UCFV.

A total of 13 interviews were conducted (4 deans and 9 faculty, including 7 department or program heads). These interviews were conducted by the researcher during the period of October 26 to November 10, 1995. All the informants allowed the interviews to be taped and the interviews were typed as verbatim transcripts and edited, for the sake of clarity, to eliminate the probes.

Results of Faculty Interviews

Individual Understanding of PLA

The initial question was designed to explore individual operational definitions of PLA as individuals experience PLA in an applied manner in their job settings. The common components of most definitions involved the evaluation of knowledge and skills acquired outside of the formal postsecondary system towards a further credential at UCFV.

While most informants recognize the learning being evaluated could have been acquired either through life or work experience, one dean is quite emphatic in stating PLA should not include evaluation of other than workplace based learning. With the exception of two informants, one who defines prior learning assessment purely in terms of advanced placement and the other who defines PLA only in terms of transfer credit, definitions of PLA are not limited to methodology. Of the 13 persons interviewed, 5 suggest a focus on assessment aspects rather than the learning components. That is, they seem to focus on how the learning would be evaluated for PLA credit rather than the learning itself.

The deans are more precise in their definitions than are the faculty. One dean, Susan Witter, talks about shifting the use of the term from prior learning assessment to the recognition of prior learning. A few faculty describe PLA as not being new and just being an extension of what has always been done (transfer credit). One department head and two faculty members state they do not know very much about it at all.

Reservations and Support

The second question was designed to explore reservations and support towards PLA. Other than Susan Witter, the dean responsible for PLA at UCFV, who said she has "no reservations whatsoever," others are not as enthusiastic.

Several issues were raised by informants. Ten of the informants believe students who receive PLA credit would be missing the classroom experience and what happens in the classroom is difficult to capture elsewhere. Ten (including two deans) are concerned whether the system has the sophistication to measure, in any valid or reliable way, previous learning.

Twelve informants identify reservations about the difficulty of assessing learning through portfolios. This is especially true for informants from the academic areas (including two deans) although informants from the applied areas echo this concern as well.

Informants are concerned about the bureaucratic structure set up for PLA and particularly the requirement that students take a portfolio course before attempting PLA. Three deans and four faculty identify the need to have some form of course and program outcomes that could be utilized in assessing prior learning.

A reservation identified by the four deans concerns the observation that adults learn in ways that do not mesh with course formats. For example, an adult may present with only part of the learning for a course or may not present with what is considered to be the appropriate theoretical background for the course. They suggest the course analogue model is too restrictive. All the deans think elective credit might be a more appropriate way to grant PLA credit realizing, at the same time, not all programs can accommodate elective credit.

From the review of the interview transcripts, it becomes evident most informants equate PLA with portfolio assisted assessment. Their reservations seem to relate primarily to portfolio assisted assessment and its suitability for their areas, in contrast with a more global concept of PLA in general.

On the other hand, four informants (the deans) are enthusiastic about PLA because it would (a) recognize learning achieved outside the classroom, particularly for the mature student, (b) give greater credence to the value of applied learning, and (c) could serve as an impetus for a process inducing courses and programs to become more specific about their learning outcomes. However, none of the faculty or program/department heads appear to share this last concern.

In general, there are more reservations than support expressed. Informants have reservations about implementation in their own areas. They are not against the idea of PLA, in principle, but they are concerned about the details of implementation.

Resistance and Barriers

The next set of questions focused on resistance and barriers to PLA. Informants were asked if they had any suggestions to make in terms of dealing with resistance or overcoming barriers.

When asked about resistance and barriers, responses from faculty and administration are varied. One dean sums it up as "when we don't know something or know about it in some detail, then it's easy to resist it because it's different from us." He goes on to identify another source of resistance as "the tremendous inertia of tradition in an educational environment where people are as wedded to their disciplines as they are to almost anything else."

Several sources of resistance were identified in these interviews. Almost all the faculty and two deans identify faculty fears as being extremely important as a source of resistance. Faculty are worried PLA may make them superfluous and their jobs may disappear if PLA becomes established within the system. Second, faculty fear the "fun" part of their jobs--classroom teaching--may disappear and their roles will be diminished to simply grading assignments.

Faculty express as a barrier the perception that credits obtained through PLA make the institution seem somehow less "respectable." One dean expresses this feeling as a concern that, if PLA were to be widely embraced, UCFV will be seen as having lowered academic standards. All faculty express fears that students would be given credit for experience rather than credit for learning.

Still further, most faculty (and one dean) express a belief that what happens in the classroom is special and the learning of those who have not been in the classroom will be inferior to those who have. Co-existent with this belief, the same people raise concerns that unless learners are directed in how and what to learn, their learning may not be as worthy as those who have been guided by faculty.

Faculty, in particular, identify as a barrier the issue of time; the amount of time needed to prepare challenge exams and to evaluate portfolios is extensive. Faculty, particularly in the traditional academic areas, express the idea that resistance to PLA may be experienced because faculty do not understand PLA. Also, traditional academic faculty tend to believe course challenge processes are a more appropriate way of assessing prior learning than portfolio assessment processes. They express concerns about being forced to assess portfolios for courses when they believe the assessment should involve taking an exam. The resistance to PLA is focused on a particular methodology they see as inappropriate and which they believe is being overemphasized.

Several faculty and two deans mention as a barrier to PLA the amount of time a student had to spend in preparing a portfolio. They express their feeling that the portfolio development process may be too onerous and many students might just decide it would take less time to actually take the course itself.

An additional barrier mentioned by the deans was the observation that not all of UCFV's courses have clear learning outcomes, which is essential for students wishing to gain PLA credit for a course. However, faculty do not mention this as a barrier.

One dean identified as a barrier the "lack of a paid champion for PLA at UCFV." He felt with more information and training, particularly at the departmental level and geared towards individual departmental needs, resistance could be overcome. "We have put up cost barriers, we have put up procedural barriers, we have put up lack of information barriers to both students and the rest of the place, which is the reason it's not getting off the ground."

Faculty resistance to PLA can be experienced by potential learners as barriers. Generally, faculty are able to identify the sources of resistance to PLA but could not see how these translated into barriers for student. The deans, however, are able to both identify the sources of faculty resistance and see how they translated into barriers for students.

Meaning of Education and the Role of PLA

Informants were asked to comment on the meaning of a UCFV credential and the general purpose of education. Generally there is consensus that getting a credential from UCFV means more than just accumulating a number of credits.

Informants identify issues of maturity, acquiring a frame of reference with which to explain the world, and accumulation of a body of knowledge and skills. PLA is seen as beneficial if it fits into that framework. If, however, it is seen as diminishing the meaning of education, then it is something to be resisted.

All informants mention mature students who bring considerable experience and knowledge with them and the dilemma of having them take courses (especially when space is at a premium) when they can best use their time elsewhere. However, one informant thought some undersubscribed departments might not think this way.

One dean believes he would be more comfortable with a more flexible system, one that measured learning output instead of credits in a discipline (similar to the British model). Faculty are consistent in viewing the educational experience as outcome based, and not time based.

Having said this, they are also in favour of having residency requirements. Other than Susan Witter (the dean responsible for PLA), faculty and administration are comfortable with a 50% residency requirement. Almost all faculty are unaware that there are several degrees at UCFV (notably adult education, business management, and criminal justice) that, under certain conditions, allow up to 75% of the credits for a degree to be acquired elsewhere. There is recognition from faculty and administration that strict residency requirements discriminate against the adult learner. Informants recognize the adult learner is increasingly geographically mobile and obtains credits from many institutions. Deans also mention new forms of education, particularly distance technologies, which may make residency requirements somewhat restrictive and obsolete. However, faculty do not mention this.

Some faculty raise the issue of quality and not being able to rely on the quality of judgements made about academic achievement by other institutions. The essence of some of the concerns expressed was that faculty need to feel they have put their "stamp" on learners. Somehow learners have to acquire what it means to be a student and a particular view of a discipline that can only be achieved at UCFV. Some mention education as a "rite de passage" in our society. As such, it was something that had to be experienced directly. One instructor characterizes education as a "rite, a right, and a write."

Faculty Motivation and Involvement with PLA

Informants were asked to comment on how faculty could get motivated to get involved with PLA. Included in this was a discussion of what kinds of decisions had to be made by both faculty and departments in terms of PLA.

Deans and faculty are consistent (with one exception) in their view that decisions about PLA had to be made both at the departmental and individual levels. Departments have to choose whether they will get involved in PLA and what methodologies are appropriate for their area. One dean, Susan Witter, states the decision is best made at the department level. If faculty could not agree at the department level on PLA, then the decision should be left up to the department head. However, other faculty and program/department heads interviewed are quite emphatic the decision has to be made by the department and not by one individual. Faculty, in particular, are quite clear PLA would fail if it were imposed from above.

Faculty motivation to get involved in PLA is minimal as faculty see the implementation of PLA adding just one more responsibility to an already overwhelming workload. This lack of motivation is compounded by responses indicating most faculty are not familiar with assessment methodologies. Taking the time to construct an individual challenge exam or to review a portfolio is an effort for which there is no additional financial recompense. This is cited as a factor by all faculty and two deans. Faculty state that since there are no incentives within the system, PLA rests on the largesse (and decision) of individual instructors.

One dean reports that "the biggest carrot will be the clear recognition that resource bases are not going to grow or grow very slowly." This is echoed by other deans and several program/department heads. The deans feel that if faculty really want to meet the needs of their students, they will have to get involved in innovative activities, such as directed study courses and PLA. However, having said this, they also agree, with one exception, that the current compensation level is probably inadequate to provide that carrot. Faculty report, if they were compensated sufficiently for their time, they thought more people would be motivated to get involved with PLA.

Faculty and deans all mention that time itself will be a motivator. PLA is a new concept and it will take time for people to understand and implement it. Initial resistance to a new idea tends to fade in time.

Training is also mentioned; faculty report they are largely ignorant of PLA and have had little experience with it. One dean believes if there were actual portfolio assessment sessions, "nuts and bolts sessions," more faculty would be motivated to get involved. Clear and specific guidelines are also suggested by some. Only two faculty and two deans mention they had attended the workshops. Faculty and deans acknowledge the UCFV workshops had not been particularly well attended. They report that, rather than have more workshops, it might be better to approach this issue at the departmental level and tailor the sessions to a specific discipline (i.e., this is how PLA could be applied in this discipline).

Relationship Between Impetus for PLA and its Implementation

Informants were asked to comment on the source of the impetus and demands for PLA. They were asked, specifically, to comment on how the role of government impetus for PLA might help or hinder the practice of PLA at UCFV.

Generally the demand for PLA is seen to be coming both from student interest and from government initiative. Faculty generally believe the impetus for PLA is student driven and in response to expressed student need. Several informants use the word "grassroots" to identify the source of demand.

When asked to consider how they would react if they found out the impetus was governmental, faculty express reservations about this kind of motivation. Their suspicion is, if the impetus is from the government, this is just one more way of making them obsolete and changing the performance role they have come to enjoy.

However, the deans recognize the impetus as government driven. All the deans suggest government is challenging all of public postsecondary education to become more efficient and PLA is just one part of this overall effort. The deans tend to see this as a positive thrust while faculty view it, unanimously, as a negative thrust.

Grading of PLA

Informants were asked how they saw the requirement, calling for a letter grade to be assigned to PLA, as helping or hindering the process of acceptance of PLA. Two deans admit they are unaware of this policy, and they think it would be very difficult to grade the learning. All of the faculty interviewed think it would be difficult, if not impossible. One dean, Susan Witter, did not agree with this.

With the exception of one dean, Susan Witter, all faculty and administration believe it would be difficult to assign a grade to a course where the student was given credit on the basis of a portfolio. Both faculty and administrators express concerns over grading portfolios as opposed to courses. They are more comfortable with course grading, since the assessment is over a period of time and based on multiple sources of measurement.

Faculty and administrators express concern over their lack of experience dealing with portfolio assisted assessment. As well, they have questions about grading portfolio assisted assessment. They are not sure what they would be grading, the learning or the portfolio. If they are grading a portfolio, they were not sure of the basis on which to grade it. And, if they are grading the learning, they are uncertain about how to handle the secondary evidence of learning presented in portfolios. With the exception of Susan Witter, none sees the need for grading portfolio assisted assessment. Some suggest that since transfer credit is awarded without grades, credit granted through portfolio assisted assessment should not be graded.

Faculty and administration would be more comfortable issuing a pass/fail grade on a PLA course, although some state this could present problems when a student tries to transfer the course. Faculty express no difficulty in assigning a letter grade if the PLA course is based on a challenge exam rather than a portfolio.

Use of a Course Analogue Model for PLA

Informants were asked to comment on the suitability of a course analogue model for PLA at UCFV. The current policy calls for use of a course analogue model; the student is given credit for a course in the calendar. The revised policy, currently under consideration, calls for allowing elective or unspecified credit. Informants were asked to comment on the relative suitability of these two models.

The acting president summarized some faculty and administrative opinions when he said, "experiences that people have, which result in their learning, don't necessarily get expressed in the nice neat packages that we tend to think about when we design curriculum." However, other faculty and deans feel that "courses and credits are the coin of the realm," and this was what academics understood.

While some (particularly the deans) think the course analogue model had been too restrictive, faculty are less convinced. Courses, rather than programs, are what are currently articulated between institutions. Faculty do not understand how giving elective or unspecified credit would help either their credibility or the student. As one faculty member said, "It's not clear to me what they would be getting credit for in that case. I don't understand how you evaluate prior learning and give college credit equivalent to some course that we don't have."

The Role of Administrative Leadership

Informants were asked to comment on their perceptions of the level of administrative and board support for PLA. The administrators interviewed report they see support for PLA coming from the board and president's offices.

One dean suggests that while support for PLA exists, it has marginal financial support. If PLA is to succeed, he thinks it imperative the board provide funding for the initiative. He indicates simply leaving it up to the goodwill of faculty would not result in any kind of impact.

One faculty member, the President of the University College Council, says she "guessed" the board was supportive of PLA because the demand was coming from the community and she sees the board as being community driven. Most faculty think there must be administrative and board support for PLA because they hear about it so much. Three respondents simply had no way of answering this question. They think there is pressure coming from either their dean or another dean to implement PLA.

Other Areas of Concern

Informants were encouraged to provide additional thoughts that could increase the researcher's understanding of the process of implementing a PLA system at UCFV. This open ended invitation proved to be very fruitful in terms of information.

The Dean of Arts stated,

> I don't know what level of support or resistance PLA is encountering right now. I don't think it should be seen as a panacea for the ills of education, but neither should it go away. It should just persist and we should build it up, slowly but surely, looking for sources of internal support. One of the biggest barriers is that it may be the wrong time. Resistance to the new and different, the strange and unknown, will go eventually. I'm quite happy to see it in the domain of the champions at this point. I'd like to encourage those champions going on and seeing what kind of support we can provide, but I'd count myself as one of those who doesn't see this as an all encompassing solution. I'm not cynical or pessimistic about PLA, but I'm not sure I'm one of the champions.

The acting president feels PLA should be given a five or six year run before any decisions are made. His concern is if it is only given two years and then dropped,

> we've got no one to blame except ourselves. It seems to me that it takes two years for people just to get a basic notion, some understanding of it, and it takes a long time to diffuse an innovation throughout a system. PLA is no exception.

Susan Witter, Dean of Access and Continuing Education and the person responsible for PLA at UCFV, believes policy changes are essential if PLA is to be implemented at UCFV. She especially believes the requirement that students take a portfolio development course before submitting a portfolio should be dropped as it represents an unnecessary barrier. She reiterates her belief that PLA is the wave of the future. PLA is part, in her mind, of the fundamental necessary reform beginning to take place in the system and indeed, in the world.

The Dean of Science and Technology conceptualizes PLA as a process bringing new students into the university college. He goes to say,

> I doubt if I could tell you anything about PLA that you don't already know, but I think its a real winner for a lot

> of the career related areas. Probably could be a winner for some of the academic ones, but there's a way to go on that area.

The President of the University College Council responds to the open ended question by indicating that PLA is,

> just one more thing to try and keep track of and do something with and infringe on my already unmanageable workload. I don't think faculty will be given any kind of recourse or time to do this. I think they are being handed the problem and told that they need to solve it. So it goes on the edges of everything else and I see that as a big barrier.

Other faculty reiterate their opinions that, unless the control over PLA is at the discipline and department level, it will not work. Caution is urged by many. Others state PLA is just part of a long term process to restructure education, and they are not sure of their perceptions of this. The final comment made by several faculty is that PLA is really nothing new. They describe PLA as what they have been doing under various other guises for a long time.

Student Interviews

Student interviews were conducted with a sample of students who either had or were in the process of requesting credit for prior learning at UCFV. The researcher had assumed the interviews could provide information crucial to understanding the implementation of PLA at UCFV and the barriers adult students faced in attempting to get PLA credit.

Development and Validation of the Student Interview Schedule

Based on the survey results and preliminary analysis of the faculty/administrative interviews, a tentative list of areas to be explored further with students was developed. This list included (a) the success or lack of success of students attempting to get PLA credit, (b) their expectations of the process, (c) their perception of the fairness of the assessment, and (d) their perceptions of the barriers they faced.

The interview schedule was reviewed by Chelene Koenig who suggested specific question wording. The interview schedule was pretested with a small group of students in the Social Work degree program, who were not included in the sample population. A review of results from the pretest indicated the student interview schedule could only be used as a guide. Student experience was so diverse, and their understanding of the process so personal, the interview guide had to be flexible to allow for this variance. The results of the pretest were reviewed by Chelene Koenig who agreed with the need to be flexible and concentrate on the subjective experience of the individual student.

Conducting the Student Interviews

The initial procedures established for the student interviews identified a sample of three students who had successful PLA experiences and three students who did not have successful PLA experiences. Six students were identified as fitting the criteria, however only four agreed to participate.

Chelene Koenig, the PLA Facilitator, was asked to identify students who had been involved with PLA. Because of the regulations of the new Freedom of Information Act, she was unable to provide the list to the researcher. Instead, she contacted each student to ask them if they would be willing to be interviewed before providing names and phone numbers to the researcher. Six students agreed to be interviewed and the researcher contacted all six, but was only able to interview four. Two of the students indicated they were willing to participate, but each missed two appointments that were made for the interviews. Permission for taping was given by all four informants and the interviews were taped and transcribed.

Outcomes of the Student Interviews

Due to the variability of the student experience, it is not possible to discuss the student experience in categories. Of the four students who were interviewed, one did use the portfolio process and has since withdrawn from the program, two were still in the process, and the fourth used practicum challenge methods. Thus, there is little commonality of experience. The descriptions of the interviews are presented as summations of students' experiences.

Student 1. This former student in the Adult Education program reports negative experiences with portions of PLA. Her experience was so negative that she dropped out of the program.

While initially she was given transfer credit for her previous academic experience and block transfer credit for the completion of a Life Skills Coach certificate program, she reports she was "turned off" at the prospect of preparing a portfolio. As part of the adult education degree, she was required to take a portfolio development course and this was such a negative experience for her she decided not to pursue the degree further. The course required her to go back to experiences she had as a child and this was very difficult for her. In addition, she reports difficulty in connecting childhood learning experiences with anything for which she could expect to receive credit.

She reports an additional barrier was the requirement she pay regular tuition for credits achieved through portfolio assessment. She also relates she had difficulty making a connection between developing a portfolio and a specific course as she did not believe her learning matched specific course outcomes.

Student 2. This student in the Social Services program successfully challenged the first year practicum on the basis of past work experience. He believes the process was fair, although he does feel he had to do it twice; once in the application to challenge and then in the challenge itself. Other than that, he has no comments. He states he is currently taking a course, where he thinks he already has the requisite skills and knowledge but is not interested in challenging it. He believes the challenge would probably not be successful, because he does not think he has "the exact terminology they would be looking for."

Student 3. This student in the Adult Education degree program has more than 20 years of experience as an air traffic controller and instructor. He is currently preparing a portfolio for submission to the Aviation Department requesting a total of 19 credits. While he has not yet submitted the portfolio, he reports he is sure that he will be successful.

He has very much enjoyed the process of preparing the portfolio and is currently searching for other courses for which he believes he could get portfolio assisted credit. He reports the ability to get prior learning credit has been a motivator to come back and complete a degree.

Student 4. This student in the Adult Education program has submitted a portfolio for evaluation. He is currently an instructor in automotive mechanics at the British Columbia Institute of Technology.

He reports his experience has not been as smooth as he would have liked. The portfolio has been submitted and returned several times with requests for more information. He believes this could have been handled much more efficiently by having an interview with the appropriate faculty member at the time the portfolio was submitted.

He indicates the advertising for the program was somewhat misleading. His understanding, before entering the program, was that he could get up to 30 credits through portfolio assisted assessment. He was disappointed to find out that while he might be able to get these credits, they would not be useful to him in his degree pursuits. These credits would duplicate credits already awarded as a result of having both the Interprovincial Trades Qualification and Provincial Instructor Diploma.

Summary of Student Interviews

Given the difficulties of identifying students who had attempted PLA and setting up interviews, the student information cannot be summarized in any coherent manner. The student experience was so diverse few commonalities were identifiable. Each student's experience is thus best understood in the phenomenological terms of their subjective reality.

Findings of the Research Phase

Findings of the research phase were considered along with change concepts and models of diffusion (identified through the literature) and explored as the necessary preconditions for educational change and the acceptance of PLA at UCFV. Data for this analysis were gleaned from the information gathering stage, which both preceded the project and continued throughout, the survey and interview results, and expert opinion. Multiple methods of analysis (triangulation) provided the tool for this phase of the project.

The purpose of this stage was to conduct an analysis that would address the first four research questions: (a) factors critical for the acceptance of educational change, (b) factors critical for the acceptance of the idea of prior learning, (c) the relationship between the nature of the innovation and the acceptance of it, and (d) how a model of diffusion of innovation can explain the level of acceptance of PLA at UCFV. This analysis and synthesis produce the findings of the research phase and become the basis for the force field analysis and articulation model in the third stage of the project.

The literature review provided the conceptual framework for the analysis addressing each question. Multiple sources of evidence were reviewed, compared, and contrasted for each question. Each of the four research questions is addressed by presenting a review of the critical concepts followed by an analysis and synthesis.

Critical Factors for Educational Change

The literature on acceptance of educational change indicates in order for change to occur, the following factors must be addressed: (a) faculty must believe change is in their best interests and change must not be seen to threaten faculty perquisites, status, or autonomy; (b) the change must be approved at the disciplinary/departmental level; (c) the impetus for the change should be seen to be coming from within the organization; (d) the organization and leadership need to set a positive climate for change; and (e) there needs to be an acknowledgement of the nature and degree of paradigm shift necessary to accomplish the change.

Faculty perception of the nature of change. In order for educational change to be achieved, faculty must believe the proposed change is in their best interests. The proposed changes must not be seen to threaten faculty perquisites, status, or autonomy (Kozma, 1985; Bok, 1986; Becher, 1989).

Faculty are, to some degree, cognizant of the need to change, to reach out to adult students and not require them to take courses and programs where they already have the knowledge and skills. Faculty indicated a high level of support for PLA, but with reservations around the methodologies used to assess prior learning.

However, they are also concerned about job security and any changes which affect their roles. Any loss of autonomy is seen as a threat. The data suggest faculty will resist anything which changes or diminishes the critical role they see for themselves in the classroom.

Department/discipline and change. For effective educational change, faculty in a department or discipline must feel they are in control over issues directly concerning them (Seymour, 1988; Becher, 1989). Decisions directly affecting the department and discipline must be made at this level for change to occur.

Survey and interview data confirm this has not yet occurred. Many disciplines and departments do not regularly discuss the issue and several respondents were unable to rate the level of departmental support for PLA. It was confirmed by several of the department heads interviewed that PLA is not on their departmental agendas. PLA methodology needs to be tied to discipline and those from the discipline must make the decisions about the suitability of particular PLA methodologies for their own area. The data confirmed confusion over PLA methodologies and even the definition of PLA.

Impetus for change. Successful educational change requires the impetus for change be seen to be internal (Turner, 1990; Hall, 1991; Bergquist, 1992; Simsek & Louis, 1994). Change which faculty believe is promoted from the outside will be resisted.

Clearly the impetus for PLA is externally driven by the provincial and federal government and quasi governmental bodies such as the Canadian and British Columbia Labour Force Development Boards. However, the data indicate few faculty are aware of this impetus and tend to believe the impetus for PLA is in response to expressed student demand. This belief that PLA is "grassroots driven" will serve to promote change.

Climate for change. The educational organization must set a positive climate for change. As well, leadership must promote change by framing the innovation clearly, creating and maintaining a climate for change, and ensuring that faculty are involved in decision making (Levine, 1980; Seymour, 1988; Hall, 1991).

There is little doubt administration has tried to frame the innovation clearly. A set of forums, workshops, and training manuals have been produced. However, this does not seem to have permeated the system. The innovation has clearly been framed by one dean, Susan Witter. However, the other deans do not share this understanding and the interview and survey data indicate a low level of awareness of the innovation and its implementation, especially as it pertains to methodology.

PLA, as an initiative, comes at a time when UCFV is facing budget cuts and possible lay-offs. It is very difficult to set a positive climate for change in a time when there are real fears about job security. UCFV faculty see themselves as creative and concerned with students; in that respect, there is a positive climate for change. They also see administration as supportive of them. On the other hand, the climate at UCFV is one in which faculty perceive (and administrators agree) the system is already overloaded. PLA adds one more responsibility to faculty workloads. Thus, on one hand the climate for change at UCFV is positive and collegial. On the other hand, there is resistance to change if it involves any greater workload than already exists.

Faculty do feel consulted; the PLA Working Group and UCFV University College Council are certainly part of the consultation process. While some faculty assume PLA is a board priority, others are not sure. Faculty assume, because they are hearing about PLA, there is leadership from the board and senior management.

Degree of paradigm shift required. Changes which are evolutionary (requiring minor paradigm shifts) are more easily accomplished than revolutionary changes requiring major paradigm shifts. In line with this, changes in product will be seen to be more desirable than changes in process. Changes in process generally require major paradigm shifts (Turner, 1990; Hall, 1991; Bergquist, 1992; Armenakis, Harris & Mossholder, 1993; Simsek & Louis, 1994).

PLA requires major paradigm shifts and is a change in process as well. Portfolio assisted assessment itself is a major paradigm shift. Faculty are used to assessing students, using multiple sources of evidence, over time. The notion that a student can assemble a portfolio of secondary evidence of learning is a new concept and requires a paradigm shift. Faculty are used to assessing learning directly; portfolio assisted assessment requires they legitimate the primacy of others, not in the system, to assess and verify learning.

Summary of factors critical for educational change. Five factors were identified as critical for educational change to occur. Faculty must believe change is in their best interests and not a threat. PLA is seen as both a threat and an opportunity, depending upon faculty and administrator viewpoint. Second, the change must be acceptable to faculty at the department/discipline level. UCFV has acknowledged this need, but it is not clear how far the departments have come in assessing the acceptability of PLA. Third, the impetus for change should be seen to be internal; PLA is seen mostly as internally driven by UCFV faculty. Fourth, a positive climate for change needs to exist and management needs to be seen as supportive of change. Given the pressures coming from threats of reduced funding, senior management and the UCFV Board are seen by faculty as setting a climate conducive to change. Fifth, changes that are evolutionary rather than revolutionary and that represent changes in product rather than process are more likely to be found acceptable. PLA, unfortunately, is a change in process which also requires a major paradigm shift.

Factors Critical for Acceptance of PLA at UCFV

In order for PLA to be accepted (and routinized) at UCFV, several conditions have to be met. Faculty must be aware of the PLA policy and understand the rationale behind it. Faculty must be knowledgeable about PLA procedures and methodologies. Faculty must support PLA and accept the role change it will entail. Course and program objectives must be specified in such a way that students can match their learning against course/program outcomes. PLA has to be integrated within the system and clear policies and procedures for PLA are needed.

Acceptance of PLA. Faculty awareness and knowledge about the rationale for PLA must be improved. If PLA is to succeed at UCFV, faculty must recognize students learn outside the classroom and this learning is authentic learning which should be recognized as such (Hall, 1991; Tough, 1991; Ambash, 1994; Thomas, 1995b). Before a practice or policy can be successfully implemented, faculty awareness must be created and acceptance levels increased.

The data indicate a low general awareness of PLA policy. However, there is a high level of personal support for PLA. Faculty report some experience with PLA, particularly in their own educational experience and with the more traditional methods of challenge, transfer, and standardized exam. However, it is not clear that they conceptualize these forms as prior learning assessment.

Faculty from the arts area had the lowest levels of awareness of PLA methodologies and personal support. However, the practice of PLA in their area is mostly limited to the traditional transfer arrangements.

Department/program heads tended to have a higher level of awareness although not necessarily support of PLA. These are the people who are charged with the implementation of PLA at UCFV. As well, they are the ones who have been traditionally responsible for approving the various institutionalized forms of PLA.

The UCFV PLA policy had been in place for 18 months at the time of the research. Given that, the level of awareness of the policy was low as has been the degree of success of portfolio assisted assessment.

Knowledge of PLA procedures and methodologies. Faculty need to become knowledgeable about the various forms of PLA and be able to make decisions about which methodologies suit their area or discipline. Resistance to a particular method of PLA needs to be acknowledged (Swiczewicz, 1990; Fisher, 1991; Harriger, 1991).

Faculty rate themselves low in terms of knowledge of PLA methodologies. In addition, there seems to be confusion about differences between PLA as a concept and portfolio assisted assessment as a PLA methodology. The survey comments and interview data indicate, for many faculty, the two are synonymous. Although approaches to inform UCFV faculty about PLA methodologies have been developed (several forums and two training manuals produced), few faculty report they have availed themselves of these opportunities for learning.

Faculty support of PLA and change in faculty roles. The level of support of faculty for PLA was high. Reservations are more about the suitability of particular methodologies for a discipline than about the idea of PLA. Faculty recognize the needs of the adult learner for a more flexible system that recognizes the multiplicity of venues in which people learn.

A prerequisite for PLA is that faculty have to be willing to consider changes in roles (Hall, 1991). Assessment is a secondary role faculty have generally seen as part of instruction rather than a primary role as required by PLA.

Much of the faculty resistance to PLA may stem from this requirement. The "onstage" role is seen as the more desirable, while the "backstage" role of marking and assessing is seen as less desirable. The onstage role is critical to faculty's view of themselves. Anything which diminishes, or is seen to diminish this critical role, will be resisted.

Some of the resistance to PLA may be coming from fears of loss of jobs and possible loss of autonomy. Issues were raised by faculty, during the interviews, about the impetus for PLA. Some feared it was part of a movement to diminish what they saw as a chief value of education--the classroom experience--and make faculty into "credential grantors."

Program and course outcomes. PLA requires course and program outcomes be clearly specified (Simosko, 1988; Thomas, 1995a; Peters, 1994). A review of course outlines, done by the researcher in 1994, indicated a variety of ways in which course and program objectives were stated. These included clear behavioral objectives, instructor objectives, indications of the body of knowledge covered by the course, and nothing at all.

Students indicate difficulty in using a course analogue model as their learning often does not match specific course objectives (when they are stated). Some faculty also have the same concerns. Faculty are concerned that unless a challenge exam is written, they have no assurance the student has the appropriate theoretical base on which to grant credit.

Faculty indicate concern over the standards used to assess learning. The new policy, which allows for elective rather than specific course credit, is still of concern to some faculty. They are not clear how this would assist them. How, for instance, would they decide how much credit to award?

Integration within the system. PLA has to be integrated within the institution (Sansregret, 1989; Swiczewicz, 1990; Thomas, 1995a). Policy and procedures need to be clear and precise, and the practice of PLA needs to be unambiguous. Students and faculty need to know how PLA is practiced, in what circumstances it is appropriate, and how the system is accessed (Swiczewicz, 1990; Harriger, 1991; Hall, 1991). PLA needs to be dispersed through the system and not limited to certain kinds of courses or certain levels of courses (Dennison, 1995).

The survey data indicate most faculty believe PLA credit should not be limited to a particular level of instruction. Yet, review of the course challenge list indicates only one upper level course (History 484--The History of Women in North America) available for challenge. The three students who were successful in getting portfolio assisted assessment were only able to obtain it for lower level courses. This may be a clear indication of how belief has not translated into practice. The practice indicates faculty do not place their upper-level courses on the challenge list, yet they believe PLA should not be limited only to lower-level courses.

There are few indications PLA has permeated the system. Only three students have been successful in gaining portfolio assisted assessment, and the number of course challenges is fairly limited (and difficult to ascertain). The PLA policy and procedures were revised, but it is not clear if the changes will make the process any easier to access.

There is no statement about PLA in the college calendar. The PLA Working Group has identified a need for a PLA brochure. UCFV has a person whose role is one of facilitating PLA within the institution. However, many faculty are not unaware of this person and her role. The relationships between PLA, course challenge, and portfolio assisted assessment are ambiguous.

Summary of factors critical for PLA acceptance. PLA must meet certain conditions in order to be accepted at UCFV. These include (a) faculty awareness, (b) faculty knowledge of PLA methodologies, (c) administrative support for PLA, (d) clearly specified course and program objectives, and (e) integration of PLA within the system. In general, the data suggest faculty are only marginally aware of PLA and their knowledge of PLA is minimal. Yet support is quite high with reservations about required role changes. Course and program objectives are specified in some areas and not others and there is little evidence faculty are motivated to work on this. PLA has not yet been integrated and routinized within the system, and policies and procedures have yet to become consolidated.

Relationship Between the Nature of the Innovation and Acceptance of the Innovation

This project explored the links between the nature of PLA and the acceptance of PLA. Rogers (1983) suggests there is a relationship between the characteristics of the innovation and the acceptance of the innovation. These characteristics include

(a) the compatibility of the innovation with existing beliefs and practices, (b) the degree to which the innovation is perceived as having a relative advantage for the adopter, (c) the degree to which the innovation can be tried in a limited fashion before adoption (trialability), and (d) the degree of complexity of the innovation.

Compatibility of PLA with existing beliefs. Those innovations compatible with an individual's belief system will be accepted more readily than those which conflict. PLA is not incompatible with existing beliefs in some ways. Faculty have had previous experience with PLA (with the exception of portfolio assisted methods) in their own educational experience. Faculty see themselves as being student driven and want to respond to student needs.

Having said that, they also want to be in control of the outcomes of education and see education as being more than the accumulation of credits. They are not sure how or what people learn outside of the classroom and they are not sure they can measure this in any acceptable way. For some PLA is very compatible with their belief systems; these are the people who are promoting PLA. For others, PLA is not compatible with their belief systems.

Degree to which PLA is seen as being advantageous. Innovations seen by the adopter as being more advantageous to the individual or system are adopted more readily than those innovations seen as being disadvantageous. PLA is seen as being advantageous by some in that it meets student demand for accessibility and portability.

However, some faculty see students who access PLA as being disadvantaged because they believe students will have missed something that occurs in the classroom situation which cannot be duplicated elsewhere. They are concerned the advantages of the current system should not be undermined and education means more than the accumulation of credits.

PLA tends to be seen as more advantageous by administration and government officials who may see it as a means for of getting more for less. Other administration and faculty consider PLA as advantageous because it is a way of ensuring students who don't need the learning are not occupying scarce seats and recognizing the needs of adult learners. However, faculty in undersubscribed programs may not see PLA as advantageous if it somehow reduces enrolment in their programs and courses.

Trialability of PLA. The ability to try out innovations on a small scale is called trialability. Those innovations which can be tried on a limited basis contribute to the ability to explore and experiment with the innovation before total adoption. Innovations that can be tried on a small scale before adoption by the entire system seem to be more readily accepted.

Douglas College chose to implement PLA in one division, Children, Family, and Community Services, on a trial basis and using only one methodology (portfolio assisted assessment). Judging from the number of credits awarded, this small scale experiment has been successful.

UCFV, in choosing a broader approach, has had less success. Only three students were successful in getting portfolio assisted credit. Eight respondents to the survey indicated they had awarded portfolio assisted assessment credits to students in 1994-95. However, the records indicate only nine credits were awarded. This may not be a discrepancy, as transcription records are not always clear. Policy calls for PLA credit to be transcripted as such--the student's transcript will indicate that credits were awarded through prior learning assessment. However, universities in British Columbia have indicated they will not, generally, allow for transfer credit for courses where credit was granted through PLA. Thus, in order to "protect" students and their ability to transfer credits, decisions may have been made by faculty to allow "regular" credit for the learning.

Complexity of PLA. Innovations which are simple are generally accepted more easily than those which are complex. PLA is a very complex innovation requiring fundamental shifts in process.

The interview and survey data indicated confusion about process, confusion about PLA and portfolio assisted assessment, and confusion about policy and procedures for implementation. PLA is not a simple innovation and thus may be more difficult to adapt. The success of the Douglas College program may have been related to PLA being allowed only in one discipline, a process which was inherently less complex.

Summary of factors of success and innovation. Factors contributing to the relative success of innovation are compatibility of the innovation with existing beliefs and practices, the relative degree of perceived advantage, trialability, and complexity. PLA as practiced at UCFV appears to be mostly compatible with existing beliefs. However, there is mixed opinion about the degree of perceived advantage. The degree of trialability was low, and the innovation very complex.

Model of Diffusion and Acceptance of PLA

Models of diffusion can explain acceptance of PLA on two levels, the organizational and the individual. Models of diffusion of innovation can focus on either the individual or the organization. These models can assist in an analysis concentrating on the stages individuals and organizations move through in their decision to adopt an innovation.

Individual stages. Rogers'(1983) model of diffusion suggests five stages individuals need to progress through in order to accept an innovation. These are (a) knowledge and awareness, (b) interest and persuasion, (c) evaluation and decision making, (d) trial, and (e) adoption.

Most individuals at UCFV are at the first stage. While awareness is limited, the return rate of the survey indicated some interest at least in exploring or taking the time to consider the issue. The data indicate most faculty were aware of a policy and program but had not progressed beyond that stage.

The second stage, interest and persuasion, is evidenced especially at the program/department head and senior management level. The topic was not new to these people; they had considered PLA, but had not necessarily made a decision to adopt.

One of the elements of action research is that it causes people to consider ideas they had not necessarily previously considered (Cohen & Manion, 1989). Review of the interview transcripts indicates that for several faculty and administrators, the interviews were prompting them to think in new ways. Thus, the interviews may have moved them from the first to the second or the second to the third stage of Rogers' model.

Evaluation and decision making, the third stage, could be indicated by those who said they were both knowledgeable and supportive of PLA. Both of these are preconditions for decision making.

The trial stage is where the individual works with the concept and sees whether it fits for them. Over a third of the respondents had been involved in granting PLA credits, eight individuals reported they had been involved in portfolio assisted assessment. The three members of the PLA Working Group who were not named as "opinion leaders" in the survey could be considered to be in the trial stage. Their commitment to the PLA Working Group could be seen as a willingness to try the concept.

Evidence of the fifth stage, adoption, is provided through analysis of the PLA Working Group Minutes. All of the people who had been identified as opinion leaders were members of the PLA Working Group. These people could be considered to be adopters of PLA. Review of provincial and federal documents indicates there are people within the system who can be considered to be adopters. It would seem the adopters are those who have routinized the concept and are involved in the implementation of

PLA. This would include the Dean of Access and Continuing Education, the PLA Facilitator, the researcher, and members of the Adult Education department.

Categories of adopters. Rogers (1983) theorizes adoption of innovation follows a normal curve. Adopters can be arranged into five categories (a) innovators, (b) early adopters, (c) early majority, (d) late majority, and (e) laggards (some of whom never adopt).

Rogers claims innovators and early adopters together make up 16% of a population. It is difficult to judge the number of innovators and early adopters at UCFV. If the level of awareness of PLA policy at UCFV is used as an indicator of being either an innovator or early adopter, then approximately 13% of the survey respondents fit into this category.

Bergquist (1992) characterizes early adopters and innovators as more likely to come from the non-dominant culture of the institution and be on the fringes of the institution. Thomas (1995a) observes most PLA practitioners are women and from departments on the fringes of the institution. Women, he claims, have been on the fringes of academia. The impetus for PLA at the university level seems to be coming mostly from continuing education (National Forum on PLA, 1995). Continuing education at the university and college level in British Columbia has been on the fringes for years; base funding is not available. Women tended to respond to the survey more than men and to indicate positive attitudes. The four people named most frequently as opinion leaders for PLA at UCFV are women. Women make up the majority of the PLA Practitioners' Group.

The groups practising PLA at UCFV, and showing the most positive responses to PLA, tend to be from the applied degree granting areas (including Social Work, Criminal Justice, Adult Education, Computing Information Systems, and Business Administration). All these are new and innovative degrees that have laddered two year diplomas into four year degrees, an innovation in postsecondary education.

The early majority are characterized by Rogers (1983) as adopting just before they see the rest of the world adopting. Certainly the interview data supported this. Most faculty are waiting to see how PLA will converge with other demands being made on them and how it will be implemented within the system.

According to Rogers, the late majority do not adopt until others in the system have already done so. Bergquist (1992) suggests the late majority adopt when it becomes politically wise to do so. Interview data appeared to support this. Many faculty indicate they will adopt when PLA becomes routinized, when their reservations are addressed, and when it becomes expedient.

Laggards (Rogers, 1983) do not tend to adopt until the innovation has already been succeeded by another one. Sixteen percent of the survey respondents indicated they did not think PLA credit should be available for the courses they taught. In other words, they probably do not intend to adopt.

Organizational stages of diffusion. Rogers (1983) describes the diffusion of change within organizations as having five stages. While he calls these "stages," they are in fact processes through which organizations must proceed. These stages (or processes) include (a) agenda setting; (b) matching or the examination of the feasibility of the innovation for solving the problem; (c) redefining or restructuring (where a unit is created within the organization responsible for carrying out the innovation); (d) clarifying the meaning of the innovation as it is refined, redefined, and absorbed into organizational mission; and (e) routinizing.

Agenda setting was part of the process that led to the initial plans for the Bachelors Degree in Adult Education. Prior learning assessment was introduced into UCFV as part of the planning process for that degree. Concurrently, there was a provincial impetus for PLA by the British Columbia Council of Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT). However, PLA has remained a limited part of BCCAT's agenda. There is no indication that all institutions, and certainly not the universities, have accepted PLA. The degree of autonomy enjoyed by British Columbia institutions (Dennison, 1995) means that government may propose but may not usually dictate. However, incentives (usually financial) can and will be offered to achieve compliance with a government initiative.

The second stage includes planning for the implementation of the innovation and an examination of the utility of the innovation for the organization. Evidence from the survey, minutes, and interviews gives some indication that UCFV is still in this process.

While the initial policy was first implemented in June of 1994, the PLA facilitator was only appointed in September, 1994. Document analysis indicates both UCFV and the province are still in the stage of planning and utility examination. The interview and survey data indicate, as a whole, UCFV is not convinced of the utility of the innovation for the organization.

The third process, redefining or restructuring, has been recently initiated as the UCFV PLA policy is refined and redesigned. The survey and interview data indicate faculty and some administrators have more questions than answers. Definitions of PLA are not consistent nor is the implementation.

Document analysis indicates MSTL and federal agencies are still working out the ways in which they would like to see PLA implemented within the system and the role for PLA within education and training. Funding for PLA remains on a project level.

The fourth stage is one in which the innovation is clarified, redefined, and absorbed into organizational mission. It does not appear that UCFV has yet reached this step. Peter Jones, President of UCFV, indicated (before leaving on a sabbatical) in his report to UCFV, Musings from Harrison, (1995) that PLA needed to be integrated within the institution. However, there are no indications of progress at this level.

The fifth stage, routinizing, appears to be a possibility not feasible until considerable progress is evident for the previous processes. Thus, it would appear UCFV is somewhere between Rogers' third and fourth steps. Analysis of documents from the federal and provincial levels indicates the first stage, agenda setting, has been achieved. However, recent documents such as Training for What? (BCLDB, 1995) and Charting a New Course (MSTL, 1995) would indicate government is still in the second stage of organizational adoption.

Opinion leaders. The role of opinion leaders in both individual and collective diffusion of innovation is critical (Rogers, 1983). Opinion leaders are those who can influence other's behaviour in a desired way and with relative frequency.

The survey data indicate only limited ability to name PLA opinion leaders at UCFV. Very few people could name five opinion leaders and many were unable to name one. However, those named the most frequently (Susan Witter, Chelene Koenig, Andrea Kastner, and the researcher) are members of the PLA Working Group and viewed to be the people at UCFV who are the driving forces for PLA. Susan Witter is clearly seen, at both UCFV and on the provincial and federal levels, to be the most influential catalyst.

Summary of diffusion of innovation theory. Imposing a model of diffusion of innovation on both the individual and collective levels allows for the analysis of the stage at which both individuals and organizations are functioning. It would appear most faculty at UCFV are in the first stages of adoption of the innovation while the organization is somewhere between the second and third stage of adoption of innovation.

Findings from content analysis of documents, survey data, and interview data were used together (triangulation) to answer the four research questions. These questions were What are the factors critical for faculty acceptance of educational change? Which factors are critical for the acceptance of PLA? How is the acceptance of innovation related to the nature of the innovation itself? And how can a model of diffusion of innovation explain the level of acceptance of PLA at UCFV?

Summary of Findings Phase

Factors critical for faculty acceptance of educational change were identified and reviewed. Factors critical for the acceptance of PLA at UCFV were also identified and reviewed. Models of diffusion of innovation were explicated and applied to UCFV. A model of diffusion of innovation was used to describe the level of acceptance of PLA at UCFV.

Development of an Articulation Process

The final phase of this MARP was to make recommendations that could enhance the future acceptability of an articulation model for private postsecondary training institutions and answer research question three. Data from the first two phases of the study were integrated to form the basis of a description of the forces that exist to both promote and inhibit change at UCFV with respect to PLA. This analysis allowed for the examination of forces (and their relative strength) needing to be considered in the creation of an articulation system.

Description of Current PLA Practices at UCFV

The results of the survey research and in depth interviews were analyzed. This analysis, along with an analysis of the documents from the first two stages, formed the basis of a description of the current PLA practices at UCFV.

Traditional forms of PLA, including course challenge and transfer are established. Transfer is better established than course challenge. Portfolio assisted assessment is neither established nor well understood. There remains much confusion over the implementation of PLA. Resistance to PLA, where it exits, is primarily focused on the portfolio assessment process. Resistance to traditional forms of PLA, such as transfer, is negligible, while resistance to concepts such as challenge appears to be negligible in theory, but may be greater in practice.

Transfer credit for nonformal education (including courses offered through continuing education and private training institutions) exists in several areas, including Business Administration, Early Childhood Education, Computer Information Systems, and Adult Education. Block transfer arrangements for training offered by the private sector appear to be limited; only one program (Early Childhood Education and one private college--Langley College) have a formal articulation agreement and it is not known how many students have utilized this arrangement.

The PLA Working Group is established within the college and on the regular meeting schedule. The committee was formed in the Fall of 1994 to steer the implementation of PLA, coordinate PLA efforts at UCFV, and promote portfolio assisted assessment. This committee has been an impetus for PLA efforts at UCFV and is responsible for the promotion of the revised policy (see Appendix B) that will guide the implementation of PLA at UCFV.

Most of the membership of the committee is from the applied areas of the college, the two exceptions being English (arts) and Computer Information Systems (science and technology). The majority of the representatives are from the more applied areas of UCFV, which is where most of the PLA activity is currently occurring. While some of the members of the committee have been appointed by their departments, which apparently consider this an important issue, most are volunteers.

Force Field Analysis

Force field analysis (Lippitt, 1981; Hawkinshire & Liggett, 1990) allows data to be examined in terms of the forces that promote change as well as the forces resistant to change within the institution and to describe the relative strengths of these forces as well as the ways in which planned change can occur. This analysis considers the nature of change at UCFV and the ways faculty need to be consulted and involved in order to create a positive climate for change. This analysis was the basis for the recommendations (see Appendix J) in A Suggested Articulation Process for Private Postsecondary Institutions.

Based on a review of the findings of the research phases of the project, a list of factors inhibiting and promoting change at UCFV was created. A panel, Susan Witter, Chelene Koenig, and Alan Cadwell (the UCFV Director of Contract Training) reviewed the list. Since no further additions were suggested by the panel, the elaboration of the factors then proceeded. The resulting analysis was reviewed by the same panel. The results of this review were integrated into the force field analysis and later into the report to UCFV.

Factors Promoting Change

Several factors promoting and supporting change at UCFV can be identified. Among them are (a) governmental impetus and changes in funding patterns, (b) administrative support, (c) faculty desire to meet student need, (d) the well established transfer and articulation network, (e) the past experience of faculty, and (f) the level of commitment of faculty to the institution.

Governmental impetus and changes in funding patterns. The reports recently issued, Charting a New Course (MSTL, 1995) and Training for What? (BCLDB, 1995) indicate there will be massive changes in funding patterns as a result both of the cuts in federal transfer payments and the belief that traditional academic disciplines are not meeting the needs for a trained labour force. Indications have been received by UCFV there will be less money available for traditional degree programs and overall funding for the institution will be cut by as much as 10% this year. This becomes a strong impetus for looking at ways to do things more efficiently.

Administrative support. Of the four persons from senior management interviewed for this research, there is some indication at least three of the four are supportive of PLA initiatives. The fourth dean, while having reservations about portfolio assisted assessment, is supportive of change and recognizes change in the institution needs to occur.

The administration also has a reputation for bottom-up input and not imposing change on faculty, recognizing "carrots work better than sticks." This is a strong force for change; most faculty believe their deans support their disciplines and would not require them to change in ways incompatible with their needs.

Responding to student need. Faculty are strongly committed to meeting what they perceive as student need. Some departments and disciplines have actively become involved in looking at new ways to teach and evaluate instruction.

Computer mediated classrooms are in their infancy, but their use continues to grow. Two courses are now being offered by remote television hook-ups with other institutions and the use of these will probably grow.

Some faculty are actively exploring ways in which to assess and integrate experiential learning. Still others are looking at modularization of courses which would enable students to access specific segments of courses where there is a need to develop further competencies. Several disciplines are actively searching for ways to integrate courses with each other and to lessen fragmentation.

Faculty are generally supportive of what they see as meeting student needs. However, perceptions of what the nature of student need varies among faculty. Thus the strength of this force may be variable; for some it is stronger than for others.

The established transfer and articulation network. This is a strong force for change, especially when the province is strongly advocating for "a seamless flow" of students among institutions and levels of training (BCLDB, 1995). Transfer arrangements generally dictate arrangements between levels of institutions rather than between the same level at different institutions. The well established articulation network means that if an institution in the province has established transferability and UCFV offers a similar program, UCFV may be able to build on their work.

However, each public institution within the system is also autonomous (Dennison, 1995). Dennison believes the university colleges may not have the transfer and articulation difficulties traditional community colleges face because they can offer a full range of programs from certificate to four year degree.

While the articulation system has been identified as a force for change, it may also be a barrier. If programs are articulated within UCFV, it does not mean they will be accepted by other institutions within the system.

The past experience of faculty. Many faculty have experienced prior learning assessment in their own history. About a third of the faculty appear to have been involved in granting prior learning assessment credits to students. PLA is not a new concept for these faculty.

There are strong indications UCFV faculty are committed to the institution and to working out problems collectively. The combined faculty-staff union (unique in the province) has had a history of collegial labour management practices. The committee and governance structure of UCFV is supportive of collective governance (much of it required by Bill 22). Faculty believe they are part of the decision making process. This high level of collegiality, and the belief of faculty they are consulted, is a force for change.

Factors Inhibiting Change

Factors which inhibit change at UCFV include (a) resistance to what is perceived as new and different and threatens established ways of doing things, (b) anything which threatens faculty autonomy and identity with the discipline, (c) faculty's reluctance to change their conceptions of their roles, (d) fears over loss of jobs, and (e) the inability of PLA to have established itself since June of 1994.

Resistance to the different. Faculty tend to resist what is different and what is not known. At the same time, they will resist changes they consider being foisted upon them. The data indicate if faculty perceive the demands for PLA were to be primarily initiated by government then they generally would be less supportive of it. The more PLA is seen as different, and threatening established ways of doing things, the more it may be resisted.

The resistance to PLA may be more of a resistance to a particular methodology (portfolio assisted assessment) than to a concept. The data indicate PLA is not a new concept but it is being confused as a concept with portfolio assisted assessment.

Faculty autonomy. Faculty are very satisfied with the level of autonomy at UCFV. Loyalty to the discipline (department) is an overriding concern. If a change is accepted by the discipline, then it may be more readily accepted by faculty within that area. Conversely, if faculty within a discipline are not convinced change is in their best interests, then change will be resisted.

Anything which challenges faculty autonomy in terms of what goes on in their classroom is likely to be resisted. As well, any change which threatens faculty autonomy to decide on the appropriateness of assessment methods for their courses will be resisted.

Changing faculty roles. Faculty teach because they enjoy the performance role. Changes which diminish this role are likely to be resisted as faculty tend to derive the most satisfaction from this role. Any change, including computer mediated instruction, which impacts this role, or the primacy of the instructor in the classroom, will probably be resisted.

Loss of job fears. Anything which might result in a loss of jobs will tend to be resisted by faculty. The research data indicated faculty in areas which are oversubscribed are more sympathetic to the notion of PLA as they see it freeing up classroom spaces. Faculty in areas which are undersubscribed are seemingly more reluctant to embrace the idea.

The loss of job fears are very real and should not be underestimated in any way. UCFV currently has a "no-cut" contract in force until March of 1997. Any faculty member with two years seniority as of April, 1995 cannot be laid off. However, this does not apply to about twenty percent of the faculty who have been hired since that date.

As well, faculty are concerned about the long term implications of PLA and its relationship with possible job loss. While many are temporarily protected, jobs in academia are difficult to find.

If an articulation system with private postsecondary institutions means faculty believe money once available to the public sector will be diverted to the private sector and there will be a concomitant loss of jobs, then there will be considerable resistance. If a large number of learners can have their workplace, leisure time, and privately organized learning accredited by public institutions, faculty may become concerned about becoming superfluous. This is a force which should not be underestimated.

Discussion of the Force Field Analysis

A review of the force field analysis indicates there are several factors serving to both promote and inhibit change at UCFV that must be taken into account if an articulation process with private postsecondary institutions is to be successful. The factors promoting change (listed in order of decreasing strength) are (a) the level of commitment of faculty to the institution, (b) the past experience of faculty, (c) faculty desire to meet student need, (d) administrative support, (e) government impetus and changes in funding patterns, and (f) the current transfer and articulation system.

There are factors serving to inhibit change at UCFV as well. Listed in order of decreasing strength, they include (a) faculty fears over loss of jobs, (b) faculty reluctance to change conceptions of roles, (c) general resistance to the new and different, (d) threats to faculty and discipline autonomy, and (e) the inability of PLA to become established at UCFV.

Changing a social system requires that existing habits or customs within the system be given up resulting in structural changes or "unfreezing" (Lippitt, 1981; Hawkinshire & Liggett, 1990). As well, social change occurs when the forces maintaining equilibrium (or homeostasis) within the system change. Usually this is because the forces promoting change become stronger than the forces which resist change.

Thus, anything which strengthens the forces promoting change and encourages faculty to give up existing beliefs and habits would cause the system to change. Governmental impetus and changes in funding patterns will provide an incentive to move beyond the stasis currently being experienced. Once PLA has been established as part of base funding, and faculty fears over possible loss of jobs resolved, PLA could become integrated within the system. The forces working for change on a provincial level will, in time, percolate down to individual institutions. Acceptance of PLA will probably come as a result of reform in higher education required by funding agencies (MSTL, 1995).

As time goes by, and more faculty recognize that PLA is nothing new, existing habits will alter thus changing the system. As well, the structural considerations necessary to implement PLA (and recommended in the report) should serve to assist in this phase. PLA, along with distance education technologies, can build on the desire of faculty to better serve students.

Incentives within the system which reward faculty who change role conceptions and get involved with innovative delivery methods (whether PLA or distance technologies), could serve to "unfreeze" the system. These incentives might allay fears over job loss. Greater emphasis could be paid to promoting PLA at the disciplinary level and encouraging creative solutions to assessment of prior learning.

Preparation of the Report

Based upon the preceding force field analysis as well as the content analysis and research findings of the first two stages, a set of recommendations was prepared for UCFV. These recommendations are included in the MARP as Appendix J, A Suggested Articulation Process for Private Postsecondary Institutions.

Areas for consideration in the report were developed. These included (a) a review of the findings of the first two stages, (b) development of a rationale for the articulation process, (c) integration of the force field analysis, and (d) recommendations for future action. These four areas were reviewed by a panel (Susan Witter, Chelene Koenig, and Alan Cadwell) who agreed upon the topics as relevant and suggested an additional area for consideration: an identification and description of a private institution for a pilot project.

The report was prepared and circulated to the panel for review. Since CDI College of Business and Technology had been selected and approved as the pilot institution, the report was also sent to Jim Cleveland, CDI's Vice President Academic, for review.

Based upon the review of the draft report by the panel, minor changes were made and integrated into the final report, which is available as Appendix J.

Recommendations of the Report

Recommendations included in the report were guided by the conclusions formed in the analysis and synthesis of the data, with particular attention to the force field analysis. These recommendations were designed to build on those factors which had been identified as promoting change at UCFV including (a) governmental impetus and changes in funding patterns, (b) administrative support, (c) the willingness of some departments and disciplines to actively explore new ways of teaching and learning, (d) the well established transfer and articulation network, (e) the past experience of faculty, and (g) the level of commitment of faculty to the institution.

The research identified several factors acting to inhibit change at UCFV, including (a) resistance to what is perceived as new and different and threatens establish ways of doing things, (b) threats to faculty autonomy and identity with the discipline, (d) faculty's reluctance to change their conceptions of their roles, and (e) fears over loss of jobs. Thus, the recommendations were designed to maximize the potential for positive change.

The thirteen recommendations, (available in Appendix J) centre around: (a) the selection of pilot institution(s), (b) selection of pilot departments/disciplines at UCFV, (c) involvement of the PLA Working Group, (d) the necessity to select programs/disciplines which have clearly specified learning outcomes (or who are willing to develop them), (d) the involvement of senior management in negotiating agreements, (e) the necessity to involve the registrar's office, and (f) the desirability of further research to track achievement outcomes of students who enter UCFV through an articulation mechanism. As well, specific strategies for achieving an articulation agreement are discussed.

Since both the literature and data supported the notion of starting where there was support and building from there, several of the recommendations centre around the institution(s) to be chosen for the pilot project(s). The research indicates support for PLA and the needs of the adult learner are greater in some areas than others (notably the applied area) and thus suggestions were made to start the activity in these areas.

Content analysis had indicated a need for a "seamless flow" of learning and, therefore, it was essential the pilot projects offer several levels of credentials (i.e., certificates, diplomas, and degrees). Since both the literature and data indicated that departments need to feel they are in control of the articulation process, recommendations about decision making centralized at the departmental level were included.

The recommendations also indicate that the articulation process must have the support of senior management at UCFV and agreements need to be signed by the president. It is also suggested that the PLA Working Group serve as an intermediary in the process and assist the department in making decisions around curricula.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

Three sets of research questions had been proposed for this study. The first set of questions included: What factors can be identified as critical for faculty acceptance of educational change and which factors are critical for the acceptance of the idea of prior learning? The second set of questions included: How is the acceptance of innovation related to the nature of the innovation itself and how can a model of diffusion of innovation explain the level of acceptance of PLA at UCFV?. The third question was what recommendations can be made to enhance the future acceptability of an articulation model for private postsecondary training institutions?

Chapter 4 presented the findings of the research phase of the project and yielded an analysis and synthesis of findings in relationship to the literature on acceptance of educational change and models of diffusion of innovation. Included in this discussion are (a) the representativeness of the survey, (b) limitations of data and methodology, (c) inconsistencies and apparent paradoxes and contradictions of the data, (d) a synthesis of some of the most pertinent aspects of the data, and (e) an analysis of the utility of models of diffusion and innovation in understanding the level of acceptance of PLA at UCFV.

Survey Results

Respondents and Non-respondents

Data available to the researcher allowed the comparison of respondents and non-respondents to the survey. Non-respondents to the survey were more likely to be male, recently employed, teaching faculty, and from the arts area of UCFV. As the data indicated, arts faculty were more likely to have less experience and knowledge of PLA methodologies and more reservations about PLA than faculty from other areas. Given that the non-respondents were also more likely to be from the arts area, it is possible the respondents' opinions and knowledge were not representative of the total population and, therefore, not a valid description of the practice of PLA at UCFV.

Departmental Response Rates

Response rates to the survey varied from 50% in the applied and continuing education areas, to 38% in the arts and 64% in educational support areas. Since a given functional area represents an array of disciplines and credentials, it is difficult to generalize even within areas. High response rates in science and technology, for instance, do not represent uniformity across the teaching spectrum. Trades faculty were less likely to respond to the survey while nursing faculty had a high response rate. There were no responses from several departments in the arts area including Anthropology, Art History, Political Science, and Sociology. In the applied areas, there was no response from the Graphics or Fine Arts departments. Thus, generalizations about the survey data within areas may not be accurate since some departments were either not represented or had low response rates.

Discussion of Limitations

The researcher has been identified with prior learning assessment efforts at both UCFV and provincial and federal levels. All of the respondents, especially the interview respondents were well known to her. This could have biased the data. On the other hand, the researcher's close relationship with many of the respondents may have prompted a higher degree of frankness. It is difficult to be a participant observer--personal opinions and knowledge of the situation may colour what is perceived to be important.

As a form of action research (Cohen & Manion, 1989), participants often begin to think of the problem and its solutions in new and different ways. This was evident in the interview results when many of the informants stated, in response to particular questions, they hadn't thought of the issue in that way. It is highly possible the act of being interviewed may have caused some of the informants to begin to think of PLA and their involvement in it in a new and different light.

Informants for the interviews were selected through consultation with Susan Witter and Chelene Koenig. Some individuals were selected for interviews because they had not replied to the survey and it was thought important to understand their perspective. The Office Administration program head was interviewed precisely for this reason, as were the heads of Applied Communications and English. Since no attempt was made to select a representative sample for the interviews, the sample was not representative of faculty at large and thus may not be generalizable to the total faculty.

The student interviews were not representative of student experience with PLA. Difficulty was experienced in identifying students who were willing to be interviewed. The student experience and perception of PLA was intensely personal and can only give indications of what barriers exist for students attempting to achieve PLA credit.

Triangulation (Cohen & Manion, 1989; Yin, 1989) methods are difficult to work with and involve the researcher being adept at picking up pattern matching. It is highly possible important points were overlooked in the data analysis. The researcher transcribed the verbatim transcripts herself which adds to interpretive possibilities as tone and voice add depth to the meaning of words.

Data Inconsistencies and Paradoxes

In reviewing data collected, several areas of inconsistency and paradox were noted. Chief among them were survey respondents' relative inability to specify credentials offered by their departments and inconsistencies between practice and belief.

The survey asked respondents to indicate the credentials offered by their department. In entering the data, the researcher noted replies from members of the same department, particularly in traditional arts and science disciplines, were often inconsistent. Since information was available to the researcher through the college calendar on credentials offered under the aegis of a department, it was possible to cross check respondents' statements. Respondents from the applied, continuing education and access, and trades/vocational areas were consistently accurate in describing their credentials, while respondents from the traditional arts and sciences disciplines were less accurate.

The more traditional arts and science faculty may not see their departments as offering a credential; rather they see UCFV as offering a four or two year degree with a major in a particular area. Literature (Kozma, 1985; Becher, 1989) suggests this is not unusual. Faculty, particularly in traditional academic areas, are more likely to have loyalty to the discipline than to the institution. If the discipline does not see itself as "offering a credential," then they are not likely to see this as a function of the department.

The survey data demonstrate personal level of support for PLA is high, yet knowledge of PLA policy and methodology remains low. Presumably this means support for the concept, but it is difficult to understand how this support is translated into practice without knowledge of PLA policies and methodologies.

A further paradox exists in the area of course challenge. Respondents indicated PLA was suitable for all levels of courses and programs. Review of the course challenge list indicates only one upper level course (other than practica) is on this list. Thus the paradox is that while informants think PLA is suitable for all levels, they have not yet translated this into practice by making it available. This is consistent with the literature. Thomas (1989), Swiczewicz (1990), and Harriger (1991) all suggest it is difficult to understand the extent of PLA within a system as it appears in many guises.

The Research Questions

Triangulation methods were used to analyze and synthesize material from various sources: documents, expert opinion, survey data, and interview data. The literature review provided a conceptual basis for the critical concepts included in each section.

Factors Responsible for Acceptance of Educational Change

Five factors were identified through the literature as critical for the acceptance of educational change. These factors included (a) faculty must believe the change is in their best interests and change must not be seen to threaten faculty perquisites, status, or autonomy, (b) the change must be approved of at the disciplinary/departmental level, (c) the impetus for change should be seen to be coming from within the organization, (d) individuals in positions of leadership need to set a positive climate for change, and (e) there needs to be acknowledgement of the nature and degree of paradigm shift necessary to accomplish the change.

It is not clear faculty uniformly view PLA as being in their best interests. Some of the resistance to PLA seems to centre around fear of loss of jobs. If students can learn outside the classroom, and credit can be granted for workplace based training and through nonformal means, then faculty may begin to see themselves as redundant. If the fear of redundancy is combined with the very real push by the federal and provincial governments to cut funding, then this fear is exacerbated. And there is no doubt that both levels of government are trying to cut costs. As a result of cuts in federal transfer payments to the province for postsecondary education, it is expected that funding levels will be cut by a minimum of 10% for the 1996-97 year.

Given the fact there is little compensation in the system for PLA at the individual faculty level, it is not surprising that faculty are somewhat resistant to PLA; if not ideologically, then by putting up barriers of suitability of methodology or concerns over time restraints. Most faculty saw themselves in favour of PLA (principle), but had concerns over either the applicability of PLA to their discipline or particular methodologies (practice).

There is some evidence faculty see PLA as somehow threatening either their jobs or their autonomy. This is consistent with the literature (Kozma, 1985; Bok, 1986; Becher, 1989) which suggests that change will not be embraced if it threatens faculty perquisites, status, or autonomy.

The level of department support for PLA is not uniform. There tends to be more departmental support in the applied areas. In those departments where there are strong advocates for PLA, PLA seems to have been implemented, even if on a limited basis. The Adult Education, Social Services/Social Work, Criminal Justice, Child and Youth Care, Business Administration, and Computing Information Systems departments see themselves as innovators and proponents of PLA (and maintain membership on the PLA Working Group). However, even within these departments there is still a wide variety of opinions about the suitability of various PLA methodologies and the suitability of a particular course for PLA credit. Without support and approval for change at the departmental level (Seymour, 1988; Becher, 1989), PLA will not become entrenched within the system.

A necessary precursor for educational change is the impetus needs to be seen as coming from within the organization rather than from external forces. Faculty are quite consistent in seeing the impetus for PLA coming from students and being "grassroots," while senior management realize the impetus is governmental.

Literature on academic change suggests the impetus for change needs to be seen as internal rather than external (Turner, 1990; Hall, 1991; Bergquist, 1992; Simsek & Louis, 1994). The data demonstrate much of the impetus for PLA is coming from government and quasi governmental bodies at both federal and provincial levels. The interview and survey data, however, indicate most faculty believe the impetus behind PLA is internally driven. If faculty begin to realize the impetus for PLA is externally driven, it is unknown what will happen to even the marginal level of support PLA currently enjoys.

Individuals in positions of leadership need to set a positive climate for change (Levine, 1980; Seymour, 1988; Hall, 1991). Data indicate both faculty and administration see UCFV as a place where change occurs and faculty are consulted appropriately about change. All of the deans interviewed expressed mostly positive views of PLA (albeit with minor reservations).

Innovations in product are more acceptable than innovations in process and those innovations requiring major paradigm shifts are more difficult to accomplish (Turner, 1990; Hall, 1991; Bergquist, 1992; Armenakis, Harris, & Mossholder, 1993; Simsek & Louis, 1994). PLA is a major shift in process, requiring acknowledgement that students learn outside the classroom and under their own motivation. As well, it requires crucial shifts in faculty roles, from provider of learning opportunities to assessment and evaluation of learning acquired outside of the classroom. These are major paradigm shifts, difficult for most faculty to accommodate, and data confirms faculty are having difficulty in making these conceptual shifts. While faculty are supportive of PLA, for the most part, they also express profound reservations about the kinds of learning students may present for evaluation.

Factors Critical for the Acceptance of Prior Learning

In order for PLA to become established within an institution, the literature (Simosko, 1988; Sansregret, 1989; Swiczewicz, 1990; Fisher, 1991; Hall, 1991; Harriger, 1991; Tough, 1991; Ambash, 1994; Peters, 1994; Dennison, 1995; Thomas, 1995a; Thomas, 1995b) suggests a number of critical factors. These factors include (a) faculty awareness that students can and do learn outside of classroom, (b) faculty knowledge of methods for assessment of prior knowledge, (c) faculty support for PLA and the role changes it entails, (d) clear specification of course and program outcomes, and (e) full integration within the system. Most of these factors have relevance when the status of PLA adoption at UCFV is considered.

Faculty awareness of PLA policy and methodology tends to be low. Faculty have not generally taken advantage of the various forums and training materials made available. The degree of confusion existing between PLA and portfolio assisted assessment is but one indicator of the low level of awareness. While faculty express reservations about particular methodologies or the suitability of particular disciplines for PLA, it is not clear they have taken any steps to deal with their questions. This is consistent with findings from other research on adoption of PLA within higher education (Swiczewicz; 1990; Fisher, 1991; Harriger, 1991).

Despite the fact there had been several provincial forums on PLA, several UCFV forums on PLA, and two training manuals published by the province, very few of the respondents had availed themselves of these. PLA literature suggests this is not uncommon (Swiczewicz, 1990; Harriger, 1991).

Over two thirds of the respondents indicated they had utilized some form of prior learning assessment (e.g., transfer credit, block transfer of credit for another credential, self directed study, standardized exams, course challenges) in their previous educational experience. Thus, credit for prior learning, in its broadest interpretation, is not a new concept. However, it is also clear, given the results from the interviews, faculty do not conceptualize all of these forms as prior learning. While transfer credit is well established in the system, apparently most faculty did not perceive it as a form of prior learning assessment. Naming transfer credit as a form of prior learning assessment makes this project action research (Cohen & Manion, 1989) as it may have caused faculty to re-conceptualize transfer credit as a form of prior learning assessment.

The data demonstrate there appears to be a high degree of confusion over definitions of PLA and confusion between a methodology (portfolio assisted assessment) and a concept (prior learning assessment). Definitions of PLA are inconsistent, even among senior management. This is not inconsistent with the literature (Simosko, 1988; Hall, 1991; Harriger, 1991).

Given the level of confusion existing about PLA methodologies, it is not surprising there is a low level of PLA credit awarded. Faculty in courses with a highly theoretical base are suspicious any methods other than examination can assess learning. As well, they are concerned adults who have learned through workplace or experiential forms of learning may not have acquired the appropriate theoretical base. Coexistent with this is the faculty belief that portfolio methods of assessment are suitable only in some areas and not others.

While faculty are aware challenge exams may be the more appropriate methodology in their area, they have concerns over the construction of challenge exams and the lack of compensation for this activity at UCFV. Currently, there is little incentive at UCFV to construct a challenge exam for a student. PLA literature (Simosko, 1988) states valid challenge exams should not be course based or use a course final, but there are no incentives at UCFV to develop non-course based challenge mechanisms.

While there appears to be support for the concept of PLA, the questions and issues raised during the course of the project suggest the support is in principle rather than practice. Faculty express delight with the performance aspects of teaching and less enthusiasm about the "backstage" areas--marking and preparation. If PLA takes away that which they love (performance) and relegates them to the area of evaluation, then they may become more resistant.

Faculty expressed concerns about lack of time to get involved in PLA. Faculty already feel overwhelmed by the demands of the system and the increasing insecurity of the system. PLA is just one more demand they need to deal with which they do not see as critical to their role. Thus, it tends to get pushed to the margins of their workload and concern.

About a third of respondents indicated they believe students in their department had been awarded some kind of PLA credit. Over a third of the respondents indicated they had personally been involved in granting PLA credit to students in the past year (most commonly transfer credit). This seems to demonstrate the paradox between belief and practice. The data from the registrar's office indicate the amount of credit awarded through all forms of PLA is not as extensive as the respondents indicate.

According to both Bok (1986) and Becher (1989), a critical factor for academic change to occur is the perceived level of departmental (disciplinary) support. Without the support of the department, change will not occur. Survey data indicate PLA is rarely, if ever, discussed at the departmental level. Many respondents were unable to even state what they thought the level of departmental support for PLA was in their discipline.

PLA requires course and program outcomes be specifically stated so students may have a basis on which to assess their learning (Simosko, 1988). Course and program objectives are specified in some areas and not others, and it is not clear faculty are motivated to address this need. This is not a paramount concern for senior management at this time. There is some opposition, at least in the arts area, to becoming specific about course and program objectives.

A review of course outlines (Wolfson, 1995) revealed a wide range of outcomes specified in UCFV courses, from terminal student performance objectives to instructor objectives to covering a body of material. The lack of specificity in course outlines is a barrier for students. Against what do they measure their learning? But it is also a barrier for faculty. How does a faculty member decide if the student has, in fact, equivalent learning when the required learning is not specified?

There are few indications that PLA has permeated the system. Only three students have been successful in gaining portfolio assisted assessment, and the number of course challenges is fairly limited (and difficult to ascertain).

There is no statement about PLA within the college calendar. While there is a PLA Facilitator, it is not necessarily clear to faculty who she is and her role. PLA has not yet been integrated and routinized within the system; policies and procedures have yet to become consolidated and general awareness is relatively low.

The original PLA policy, initially implemented in the Fall of 1994, was in the process of revision during this project. The original policy had specified portfolio assisted assessment was to be graded. Faculty have expressed reservations about having to grade portfolio assisted learning; they are unsure if they are grading the learning or the portfolio itself.

The original policy called for course analogue credit to be granted for PLA. Students had to find a course in the college calendar which matched their learning and was appropriate for their program. However, adult learning rarely has that precise a match (Mandell & Michaelson, 1990). The new policy allows for non-specific course (or elective) credit. Given that most of the diploma and certificate programs do not have elective credits, it is uncertain just how granting a student elective credit would account for the necessity of taking required courses. As well, faculty are unsure of how to judge how many credits to award for a block of learning.

The former policy called for a portfolio to be developed for every course that the student was requesting credit. This proved to be a barrier for students as it entailed a great deal of work. The new policy allows for one portfolio to be developed for a block of credit. While this may make it easier for students, it is not clear how it will work if the block of credit the student is asking for crosses disciplinary boundaries.

Student experience demonstrates most have not had an easy time with PLA. Students generally anticipated there would be more credit available and the process would not be so cumbersome. For some, the portfolio development process was very onerous. Others realized their learning did not match specific course outcomes. These findings are consistent with the literature on PLA (Simosko, 1988; Swiczewicz, 1990; Harriger, 1991).

Relationship between Characteristics and Acceptance of Innovation

Literature on change (Levine, 1980; Rogers, 1983, Seymour, 1988) suggest a relationship between the characteristics of the innovation and the acceptance of the innovation. These characteristics include (a) compatibility of the innovation with existing beliefs and practices, (b) degree to which the innovation is perceived as having a relative advantage for the adopter, (c) degree to which the innovation can tried in a limited fashion before adoption (trialability), and (d) degree of complexity of the innovation.

PLA is not incompatible with existing beliefs in some ways. Data indicate faculty have experienced PLA in their own education, see themselves as being student driven, and want to respond to student needs. However, they also want to be in control of educational outcomes and see education as being more than the accumulation of credits. They are not sure how or what people learn outside of the classroom and they are not sure they can measure this in any acceptable way.

PLA is seen as advantageous by faculty as it meets student demand for accessibility and portability. However, some faculty see students who access PLA as being disadvantaged by it --they will have missed something that occurs in the classroom situation which cannot be duplicated elsewhere. They are concerned the system not be shortcut; education means more than the accumulation of credits.

PLA tends to be seen as more advantageous by some administrators and government who may see it as a way of getting more for less. Other administration and faculty may see PLA as advantageous because it is considered both as meeting the needs of adult learners and not having students who do not need the learning occupying scarce seats.

The ability to try out innovations on a small scale before adoption is called trialability. What was intended to be a "broad brush" approach at UCFV has meant, in practice, a trial approach. The recognition that PLA would experience resistance and not be acceptable across the board, has led to the practice of implementing PLA only in those areas (notably the applied areas) considered to be receptive. This, however, has been disadvantageous to students who sometimes present with learning in the more traditional academic areas.

Simple innovations generally are adopted more easily than those which are complex. PLA is a very complex innovation requiring fundamental shifts in process, which may explain why it has not been readily adopted. Confusion about process, confusion between PLA and portfolio assisted assessment, and confusion about policy and procedures for implementation, demonstrate the complexity of PLA as an innovation.

The UCFV findings are consistent with studies of PLA at other institutions (Swiczewicz, 1990; Fisher, 1991; Harriger, 1991; Brown Harvey, 1992). The confusion between prior learning assessment and portfolio assisted assessment appears to be endemic. Resistance to PLA because of fears that it will diminish the classroom role are also apparent in other studies. Resistance to PLA seems greater in those institutions and departments with greater academic prestige (i.e., arts programs). These fears seem to revolve around the perception (perhaps justified) that PLA may somehow lower the prestige of a credential (Hall, 1991).

Model of Diffusion and Acceptance of PLA

Models of diffusion of innovation (Rogers, 1983) can explain acceptance of PLA on two levels: the organizational and the individual. These models assist in an analysis of the stages individuals and organizations move through in their decision to adopt an innovation. However, since direct questions about perception of stage of innovation, either on an individual or organizational level of adoption, were not asked, inferences can only be made.

Rogers' (1983) model of diffusion suggests there are five stages individuals need to progress through in order to accept an innovation. These are (a) knowledge and awareness, (b) interest and persuasion, (c) evaluation and decision making, (d) trial, and (e) adoption. With the exception of a few faculty (primarily members of the PLA Working Group and three of the four deans), most faculty were barely at the first stage. A few faculty, about 10%, could be considered to be at the second stage. Very few faculty, and perhaps only those named as "opinion leaders" could be considered to be adopters.

Rogers (1983) theorizes adoption of innovation follows a normal curve. Adopters can be arranged into five categories: (a) innovators, (b) early adopters, (c) early majority, (d) late majority, and (e) laggards (some of whom never adopt). Direct questions were not asked about individual perception about their level of adoption. It is difficult, therefore, to judge the number of innovators and early adopters at UCFV. Rogers suggests innovators and early adopters comprise about 16% of the population. This was borne out in this study. About 16% of the respondents expressed adoption of PLA; certainly the people named as opinion leaders could be considered the innovators.

Bergquist (1992) and Thomas (1994a) have both observed that innovators and early adopters tend to come from non-dominant cultures of the institution and change often proceeds from the edges inward. Women faculty, according to Thomas (1994a), are particularly likely to be on the fringes of the institution and often somewhat marginalized. At UCFV, faculty in the applied areas, particularly the non degree certificate and diploma programs, express feelings of marginalization as well. Both women and applied faculty have tended to be the innovators and early adopters of PLA at UCFV. The people named most frequently as PLA opinion leaders at UCFV were women and women make up the majority of the PLA Practitioners' Group. Men and individuals from the dominant culture (academic arts and science) were the most likely to express scepticism about PLA.

Organizational Stages of Diffusion

Rogers (1983) describes the diffusion of change within organizations as having five stages. While he calls these stages, they can be viewed as processes through which organizations must proceed. These stages (or processes) include (a) agenda setting, (b) matching or the examination of the feasibility of the innovation for solving the problem, (c) redefining or restructuring (where a unit is created within the organization responsible for carrying out the innovation), (d) clarification where the meaning of the innovation is refined, redefined, and absorbed into organizational mission, and (e) routinizing.

Content analysis of documents gives an indication that UCFV has achieved the first stage, "agenda setting." Since change rarely proceeds in a uniform or linear progression, different portions of the organization will be in different stages of acceptance of innovation. There is evidence in the findings that PLA has become part of the institutional agenda. However, it is not clear that, except for a few departments in the applied areas, it has moved beyond this stage. Certainly in those departments where PLA is a routine agenda item, where PLA has been "normalized and routinized," it has gone beyond this stage.

The researcher's department, Social Services/Social Work is an example of the third stage. PLA in this department has a focus and a mandate, but this is probably more due to the researcher's personal influence than any intrinsic factor.

In general, the data supported the utility of Roger's model of diffusion of innovation. Individual interviews could have been evaluated against criteria for stage of adoption and individual responses could have been categorized as to stage of adoption.

Recommendations for an Articulation Model with Private Postsecondary Institutions

Data from the first two phases of the study were integrated to form the basis of a description of the forces that both promote and inhibit change at UCFV in relationship to PLA and to guide the creation of an articulation system with private institutions. Force field analysis (Lewin, 1951; Lippitt, 1981) allows data to be examined in terms of the forces promoting change as well as the forces resistant to change within the institution and to describe the relative strengths of these forces.

A review of the force field description indicates there are several factors which serve to both promote and inhibit change at UCFV and which must be taken into account if an articulation process with private postsecondary institutions is to be successful. The factors promoting change (listed in order of decreasing strength) are (a) the level of commitment of faculty to the institution, (b) the past experience of faculty,

(c) faculty desire to meet student need, (d) administrative support, (e) government impetus and changes in funding patterns, and (f) the current transfer and articulation system.

Factors inhibiting change at UCFV (listed in order of decreasing strength) include (a) faculty fears over loss of jobs, (b) faculty reluctance to change conceptions of roles, (c) general resistance to the new and different, (d) threats to faculty and discipline autonomy, and (e) the inability of PLA to establish itself at UCFV despite the concerted efforts of some.

Generally change in higher education proceeds without much careful investigation and planning (Levine, 1980; Hall, 1991). The recommendations in this report were conceived as a result of an analysis of both the forces promoting and inhibiting change at UCFV. Given this degree of careful planning, it is reasonable to expect that it may be possible, with time, to implement a system of articulation.

Conclusions

The data and information obtained from the implementation of the procedures for this project provides a basis for a series of general conclusions related to the purpose and research questions proposed for this MARP. The procedures, implemented to address the first two research questions, produced information supportive of a series of findings presented in Chapter 4. These findings were used as the primary basis for the development of a force field analysis. This analysis provided a basis for the identification of specific strategies that could be implemented in order to establish an articulation system between UCFV and private postsecondary institutions.

An analysis of the status of implementation of PLA at UCFV and the attitudes and perceptions of faculty and administration suggest, when analyzed, that four major conclusions can be drawn. A fifth major conclusion relates to the recommendations and strategies included in the report on articulation with private postsecondary institutions.

The evidence obtained from various sources (analysis of documents and minutes of meetings, survey and interview data) supports the conclusion that, while the principle of PLA may be acceptable to faculty, there is less support for PLA as a practice. A second major conclusion can be drawn from the data relating to the existence of significant barriers for students attempting to achieve PLA credit at UCFV. Resistance on the part of faculty is often experienced as barriers by students.

An observation, based on analysis of data and information, suggests PLA is just one component of educational reform. This forms the basis for the third conclusion reached: the acceptability of PLA may rest on how it is integrated with educational reform being instituted within the system. A fourth conclusion, based upon interpretation and analysis of data, is that Rogers' (1983) model of diffusion can explain the level of acceptance of PLA at UCFV.

The fifth conclusion relates to the report on articulation with private postsecondary institutions. A planned change process (as suggested by the literature) could assist in ensuring the success of an articulation system.

Support for Principle but not Practice

Based upon the survey, interviews, and review of existing policy and practice, it can be concluded that while there is support, albeit marginal, for PLA as a principle, there is much less support for its practice. As well, there is a high level of confusion over the PLA methodology of portfolio assisted assessment and the concept of prior learning assessment.

The data indicate a lack of clarity and consistency in how PLA is being managed within UCFV. While credit transfer mechanisms are clearly understood, challenge and portfolio assisted mechanisms are not. It is difficult to get a picture of how much course challenge credit is granted at UCFV because student transcripts do not necessarily differentiate between courses taken for credit and credit achieved through portfolio assisted assessment or challenge mechanisms.

Those who have adopted PLA have done so because it seems to fit with their existing beliefs and practices. PLA, for these faculty, mostly in the applied areas, seems to be an extension of what they have always done; recognize significant learning achieved outside the classroom. While faculty generally expressed positive views of PLA, there are only a limited number of PLA credits granted, whether through challenge or portfolio assisted methods. Therefore, it can be concluded that while faculty may appear to support PLA in theory, they resist it in practice.

Resistance and Barriers

Another conclusion, drawn from the research, is often what can be attributed to resistance on the part of faculty towards PLA is experienced as barriers by students. An example is the need, if PLA is to become integrated within the system, for clearly specified course and program outcomes that would enable students to have a basis on which to assess whether their learning matches a particular course or program. This has not happened at UCFV, course and program objectives are widely variant in how outcomes are specified (if indeed they are specified at all).

There are a number of concerns, expressed by faculty, which translate into barriers for students to access PLA, including grading, transcription, and payment to faculty assessors. The kind of credit (analogue or elective) to be granted to students accessing PLA is confusing to both students and faculty. Faculty are not sure how they would award elective credit and how they would make the decision on how much to award. As well, the issue of who will assess learning in areas where UCFV does not have the expertise to do so remains to be resolved.

The data indicate faculty resistance to PLA is centred around the degree to which it is perceived as threatening typical (and highly valued) faculty roles. Even the proponents of PLA do not seem to be cognizant of the extent and nature of the paradigm shift required of faculty and the amount of resistance engendered by PLA. Faculty who could be considered supportive of PLA have concerns over its implementation and the role changes required.

The "rocky road" that PLA has met with in the past eighteen months, the necessity to rework the policy, and the low number of credits awarded through PLA, allow for the conclusion that PLA is not integrated within the system.

The data supports the conclusion that faculty are not, in general, convinced students who acquire learning outside of the classroom have the appropriate theoretical background provided in the classroom. Faculty tend to see classroom activities as being the core of learning and express reservations and doubt learners could accomplish this, even with rare exceptions, on their own or in workplace settings.

Faculty are uncomfortable assessing portfolios and unsure of how to grade this kind of learning. More used to assessing learning using multiple methods over a long time period, faculty express reservations about assessing learning through portfolio assisted assessment. As well, faculty are apprehensive about the use of existing challenge mechanisms.

There are barriers for students attempting to gain PLA credit at UCFV. These barriers include restrictive and difficult to understand policies and procedures, lack of information about PLA, and the difficulty of matching prior learning with an existing course. Students who attempted PLA at UCFV reported that their expectations were it would be easier than it was to achieve credit. As well, it was presumed at the outset of PLA that there would be a plethora of applicants for credit. This groundswell never materialized. While PLA sounds good, the existing processes for granting credit are cumbersome enough that learners decided, in some cases, it was easier to take the courses.

Educational Reform

Because of cuts in federal transfer payments, as well as other forces calling for educational reform, there are widespread changes being demanded within the system. PLA is just one of these changes. The recently issued reports Training for What? (BCLDB, 1995) and Charting a New Course (MSTL, 1995) suggest traditional arts and science faculty and courses will receive less support than they have received in the past. The switch in federal transfer payments from the public to the private sector and the call from MSTL and the PPSEC for articulation of the public and private systems are perceived as threats to traditional education.

Faculty realize there are system wide drives toward a fundamental restructuring of education. However, faculty are not unanimously in favour of this restructuring. To the extent that faculty see their jobs as being threatened, they will resist these changes, again if not in principle then in practice. To the extent PLA is seen as part of this reform, it can be concluded resistance will be displayed by those who are not in favour of the reforms.

PLA is just one educational reform. UCFV has committed itself to examining the process of change. An internal task force on change and reform of higher education has been struck. The mandate of this group is to examine how UCFV can accommodate and implement the changes needed as a result of the restructuring of higher education. The creation of this task force may be an acknowledgement of the role of administrative leadership in fostering change at the institutional level. While the focus of the task force is on strategies for dealing within institutional change, it is reasonable to expect, given Dr. Peter Jones' (UCFV President) support of PLA, that PLA will be one of the agenda items.

Models of Diffusion

The final conclusion drawn is that Rogers' (1983) model of diffusion of innovation can explain the acceptance of PLA on both individual and organizational levels. There are relatively few faculty and administrators who could be considered innovators and early adopters. Indications exist some people will never adopt. A conclusion which can be drawn is that for the greatest number of faculty, those who have not yet adopted (the early and late majority according to Rogers), PLA will be adopted when it is seen to be both advantageous and beneficial and integrated within the system. Some faculty, primarily in the arts and science area, will probably never adopt.

The data supported the conclusion that UCFV, as an institution, is probably somewhere between the first stage (agenda setting) and the second stage (feasibility). Only a few departments, mostly in the applied area, have moved into the third stage (redefining and restructuring).

Implementation of the Report

The fifth conclusion is there is evidence the recommendations in the report, A Suggested Articulation Process for Private Postsecondary Institutions, based on an understanding of both change and adoption of innovation theory, have a greater likelihood of being accepted than the more typical methods used to implement innovation in higher education. The data and information reviewed in this MARP indicate the implementation of PLA at UCFV could have been initially designed to address some of the factors inhibiting adoption of PLA at UCFV had there been greater attention to the planned change process.

However, the key factor that must be considered, if the articulation process is to succeed, relates to changes in faculty attitude and practice. Unless both faculty and management are in agreement about these changes and until such time as faculty fears are allayed (unfreezing the system), change will not occur. Translating the recommendations into action will require both a concerted effort and appropriate incentives. UCFV has an opportunity to become a leader in British Columbia in articulating with private postsecondary institutions. However, it will not happen without faculty change and administrative support.

Implications

Unless PLA is seen by faculty as an integral part of the way educational services are offered to students, PLA activities will continue to be marginalized and on the fringe of the institution. Until such time as faculty fears and issues are resolved, PLA will remain on the fringe of the institution. Fears that need to be addressed include loss of valued job roles and loss of job security. As well, if PLA is to become integrated and routinized in the institution, it must be integrated into base budget funding.

The extent to which faculty believe the impetus for PLA is student driven will influence the degree to which they are willing and able to get involved in PLA. Thus, in order to integrate PLA within the institution, it may be necessary to minimize the role federal and provincial governments are taking in promoting PLA and concentrate on perceived student need and demand.

Given the extent to which PLA requires faculty to make major changes in the way they view students and learning (paradigm and process), a major implication of this study is that PLA will not succeed unless faculty are offered "carrots" to make these shifts. The incentives currently within the system are probably not sufficient to get faculty interested in PLA.

To the degree that PLA is seen as synonymous with the changes in funding patterns, it will be resisted. If PLA is to become integrated, methods will have to be found to separate the PLA issue from other funding issues and not have PLA be seen as one more way in which faculty can be required to do "more for less."

PLA needs to be reconceptualized at UCFV if it is to succeed. Faculty need to be supported in viewing portfolio assisted assessment as just one method for assessing prior learning. The integration of portfolio assisted assessment with other more traditional PLA methodologies (including transfer of credit and course challenge) should occur.

Issues of grading of portfolios, transcription of PLA credits, and payment to faculty assessors need to be worked out. Some way has to be found of acknowledging the faculty work involved in creating a challenge exam or grading a portfolio, and an appropriate method of compensation or acknowledgement instituted.

If PLA is to succeed within the institution, then it has to be framed in concepts and language compatible with language used by faculty. Given the greater acceptability of PLA to applied faculty, it appears that PLA efforts should be concentrated in this area. It may be, with time and moderate success, other more resistant faculty who see the results of students who have completed pre-requisites through PLA, will be encouraged to integrate PLA in their own courses.

There is a lack of information available on PLA, both for faculty and students. The available information has not been read by most faculty. Student based information has been insufficient. If PLA is to succeed, then it needs to have more prominence within the institution, literature needs to be developed, and the concept promoted.

The focus taken by the province in promoting PLA assumes the difficulties in implementation are ones of training faculty to implement PLA using portfolio assisted assessment. Thus, their focus has been on the provision of training events. The research data indicate, while lack of training may be a problem, most faculty have more fundamental difficulties with the notion of PLA than just a lack of training in assessment. If PLA is to succeed at UCFV, then it has to be seen as a valued educational activity within its own right. Given the degree of faculty resistance to educational reform, PLA needs to be seen as a minor, not major, part of the process of educational reform.

Recommendations

There are five areas of recommendations in this MARP. These recommendations include structural considerations and improvement of the PLA process, promotion of PLA at the departmental level, building on strengths, and exploration of allied endeavours.

The first set of recommendations could be considered structural in nature. Consideration should be given to creating a position of "Coordinator of Prior Learning" at UCFV. The current position is one of facilitation rather than coordination. It would appear PLA exists under other guises at UCFV. A coordinator could work on developing portfolio assisted assessment and also coordinate workplace based PLA training and develop articulation agreements with private postsecondary institutions. It would be advisable to coordinate PLA activities under one rubric in order to get an accurate picture of the nature and extent of PLA activities at UCFV.

There are several recommendations for streamlining the PLA process. The survey of PLA practices, initiated by the PLA Coordinator in Fall, 1995, should be continued every semester. This would ensure a total and complete picture of PLA as practiced at UCFV is obtained. Still further, ways need to be found to assist faculty to clarify the differences between portfolio assisted assessment and prior learning assessment.

Some way of incorporating PLA activity in base budget funding should be sought. Still further, PLA literature for students, faculty, and the community needs to be developed. A brochure on PLA for students considering PLA need to be created. Ways need to be found of publicizing the successful PLA attempts. Training in both suitability of methods and applicability of PLA methods should be tailored to specific departmental or area needs.

The second set of recommendations concerns the need to resolve issues pertaining to PLA, including transcription of PLA credits, grading of PLA credit, transferability of PLA credit, and suitability of particular methodologies to particular disciplines. It is suggested incentives be found to acknowledge the faculty work involved in creating a challenge exam or reviewing a portfolio, and an appropriate method of compensation or acknowledgement be instituted.

The third set of recommendations is that PLA needs to be promoted at the departmental level. It is suggested the PLA Coordinator make individual contact with each department. This contact, at the departmental level, would serve to promote PLA by tailoring presentations to the needs of each discipline. Concurrent with this, it is recommended the deans in each area offer some kind of incentive to faculty to ensure course and program outlines are stated with clear outcomes such that students can understand what is expected of them. This would also assist faculty in understanding the criteria against which to assess prior learning.

The fourth set of recommendations involves building on established strengths. PLA should be encouraged in those departments that have shown interest, notably in the applied areas. These success stories could serve as a model for others. If faculty are presented with students who have received PLA credit and see these students are not appreciably different from those who were enroled in classes, then they may be inspired to look more positively on PLA.

Senior management should encourage greater use of course challenge. The mechanism already exists and is understood and accepted by most UCFV faculty. Given the level of reservation about portfolio assisted assessment, it may be wiser to look at course challenge mechanisms especially when course analogue credit is being sought. Course challenge does not need to involve examination; instructors are encouraged to use other methods including interviews, documentation, and skills demonstration for course challenge. Departments and faculty should be encouraged to be creative about how students can demonstrate learning.

UCFV should consider exploring other well-articulated systems, such as PONSI and DANTES, to accredit training acquired through the workplace. Linkages with workplace training need to be created and explored for suitability at UCFV. The recommendations in the report A Suggested Articulation System with Private Postsecondary Institutions, should be presented to faculty not as a new thrust but as an extension of what has always been done. Given that the articulation system between public institutions is already in place, there is a great deal of wisdom in conceptualizing the articulation system with private training institutions as an extension of that process.

Recommendations for Implementation

Recommendations for implementation of this MARP are two fold. First, UCFV should consider implementation of the recommendations of the report on articulation with private postsecondary institutions. CDI has been identified as a target institution and negotiations with them should begin as soon as possible. As well, consideration should be given to identifying one or two other institutions that could be approached in order to begin the articulation process. Since CDI's training is primarily in the Office Administration and Computing Information Systems disciplines, it is suggested approaching other institutions offering training in different areas.

Second, UCFV should ensure the new PLA policy, when final approval is achieved, is widely circulated. Departments should be consulted about implementation of the policy.

Third, UCFV should consider setting up "hands-on" training sessions for each department. These training sessions should focus on individual department needs for implementation of PLA systems suitable for their area.

Recommendations for Dissemination

The report prepared for this MARP, Recommendations for an Articulation System with Private Postsecondary Institutions should be circulated both within UCFV and to MSTL, the provincial Standing Committee on PLA, BCCAT, PPSEC, and interested colleges and universities. Given the lack of research on PLA implementation in Canada, particularly at the university and university-college level, it is suggested the report be made available through the HRDC Prior Learning Secretariat. Consideration should be given to making the report available through HRDC's World Wide Web server.

A summary of the findings of this MARP will be circulated to all faculty who requested it by signing their names to the survey instrument. This will assist in the dissemination of the results within the institution.

Recommendations for Further Research

Further research should be undertaken to determine faculty understanding (and practice) of course challenge. Further research could explore faculty reservation towards PLA as a function of PLA mechanism. As well, further research is indicated to ascertain why faculty do not take advantage of existing training methods.

Further research should be designed to track students who have received PLA credit to see if their college career paths are different from those who did not receive PLA credit. This research would be appropriate regardless of PLA method. Currently there is no system that tracks success of transfer students as opposed to those who start and end their careers at UCFV.

Further research could explore the relationship suggested by Thomas (1995a) and others about the marginality of PLA. Thomas has suggested PLA has its greatest appeal to women, both as practitioners and students. This could be explored in greater depth. Further study could be implemented within a year to evaluate the degree to which UCFV has implemented any of the recommendations in this project. It would be interesting to follow-up with the attitudinal survey in another year to see if the level of adoption of PLA as an innovation has increased.

Further research could evaluate the impact of the revised PLA policy. Given the experience at Douglas College, with its trial limited to one department, it would be interesting to replicate this study at Douglas.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adelman, C., Jenkins, D., & Kemmis, S. (1980). Rethinking case study: Notes from the second Cambridge conference. In N. Simons (Ed.), *Towards a science of the singular.* Centre for Applied Research in Education, University of East Anglia, C.A.R.E. Occasional Publications No. 10.

Adelman, C. (1989, November). *Using transcripts to validate institutional mission: The role of the community college in the postsecondary experience of a generation.* Paper presented at the American Society Higher Education annual meeting, Atlanta, GA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 313963.

Aiken, S.H.(1987). Trying transformations: Curriculum integration and the problem of resistance. *Signs, 12*(2), 255-275.

Alkov, R.A., & Gaynor, J.A. (1991). Attitude changes in navy/Marine flight instructors following an aircrew coordination training course. *International Journal of Aviation Psychology, 1*(3), 245-253.

Ambash, L.C. (1994, Spring). Faculty perspectives on the assessment of prior learning. *CAEL Forum*, 27-28.

Anderson, T., & Ross, G. (1992, August). *Earning college credit for your peace corps service.* Washington, DC: Peace Corps, Information Collection and Exchange Division.

Apling, R.N., & Aleman, S.R. (1990). *Proprietary schools: A description of institutions and students.* CRS Report for Congress 90-428 EPW. Washington, DC: Library of Congress.

Apps, J.W. (1981). *The adult learner on campus.* Chicago, IL: Follet Publishing Co.

Apps, J.W. (1985). *Improving practice in continuing education.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Apps, J.W. (1988). *Higher education in a learning society.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Argyris, C. (1993). *Knowledge for action: A guide to overcoming barriers to organizational change.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Armenakis, A.A., Harris, S.G., & Mossholder, K.W. (1993). Creating readiness for organizational change. *Human Relations 46*(6), 681-703.

Armstrong, P.(Ed.). (1994). Reflections on changing practices, contexts, and identities. *Proceedings of the annual meeting of the standing conference on university teaching and* research in the education of adults. SCUTREA. Hull, England: University of Leeds, Department of Adult Continuing Education.

Ash, P.M. (1992). Organizational health and teacher stages of concern about an innovation. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ.

Assister, A.A. & Shaw, E. (Eds.). (1993). Using records of achievement in higher education. London, England: Kogan Page Ltd.

Baldridge, J.W., & Deal, T.E. (1983). The basics of change in educational organizations. In J.V. Baldridge & T.E. Deal (Eds.). The dynamics of organizational change in education (pp. 1-11). Berkeley: CA: McCutcheon.

Barman, J. (1991). The west beyond the west. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Baskett, M.H.K. (1991) (Ed.). Proceedings of the 10th annual conference of the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education. Kingston, ON: Faculty of Education, Queen's University.

Bauslaugh, G. (1995, May). Directions 1995-1997. Victoria, BC: Centre for Curriculum and Professional Development.

Becher, T. (1989). Academic tribes and territories: Intellectual enquiry and the cultures of disciplines. Bristol, PA: Society for Research into Higher Education and the Open University Press.

Bedard, R. (Ed.) (1989). Proceedings of the 8th annual conference of the Canadian Association for the study of Adult Education. Guelph, ON: University of Guelph.

Bensimon, E.M., & Neumann, A. (1993). Redesigning collegiate leadership. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Bergquist, W.H. (1992). The four cultures of the academy. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Bergquist, W.H. (1993). The postmodern organization: Mastering the art of irreversible change. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Bird, J.A. (1983). The bifurcation of higher education: The effect of nontraditional programs on the perpetuation of inequality. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, CA.

Birnbaum, R. (1988). How colleges work. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Blake, L. (1992). Reduce employee's resistance to change. Personnel Journal 71(9), 72-76. Available ABI/Inform 92-49653.

Blower, D.F., & Parsons, N.A. (1989, May). The challenge of experiential learning. Paper presented at the Conference of Association of Canadian Community Colleges, Regina Saskatchewan.

Blunt, A.(Ed.). (1992). Proceedings of the Annual Adult Education Research Conference (AERC)meetings. Saskatoon, SK: College of Education, University of Saskatchewan.

Bok, D. (1986). Higher learning. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Boucouvalas, M., & Krupp, J.A. (1989). Adult learning and development. In S.B. Merriam & P.M. Cunningham (Eds.). Handbook of adult and continuing education (pp. 183-200). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Brain, S., & Koenig, C. (1994). Prior learning assessment in British Columbia: A guide to earning credit for your skills and knowledge. Burnaby, BC: Open Learning Agency Press.

Brazziel, W.F. (1989). Older students. In Levine & Associates (1989). Shaping higher education's future. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

British Columbia Labour Force Development Board (1995, November). Training for what? Victoria, BC: Author.

Brookfield, S. (1984). Adult learners, adult education, and the community. New York: Teachers College Press.

Brookfield, S. (1987). Developing critical thinkers. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Brown Harvey, J. (1992). A comparison of two theories of resistance to innovation in medical record administration baccalaureate degree programs. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA.

Buchbinder, H., & Newson, J.A. (1990). Corporate-university linkages in Canada: Transforming a public institution. Higher Education, 20, 355-79.

Burke, J.C. (1994). Educational's new challenge and choice: Instructional technology - old byway or superhighway? Leadership Abstracts, 7(10), 4 pp. Available: Online ERIC Document Reproduction Service ED 347873.

Burke, R. (1993). Prior learning assessment: Faculty assessor guidelines. Hamilton, ON: Mohawk College of Applied Arts and Technology.

Butterworth, C., & Edwards, R. (1993). Accrediting prior learning at a distance. Open Learning, 8(3), 36-43.

Cabell, H. W. (1993). Experience counts: Portfolio development in five weeks. Tuscaloosa, AL: New College External Degree Program, University of Alabama.

Calder, J. (Ed.). (1993). Disaffection and diversity: Overcoming barriers for adult learners. Bristol, PA: Falmer Press, Taylor & Francis, Inc.

Carmon, M. (1992). From anxiety to action: Facilitating faculty development during curriculum change. Nursing and Health Care, 13(7), 364-368.

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (1977). The mission of the college curriculum: A contemporary view with suggestions. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Carr, C. (1994). 7 keys to successful change. Training, 31(2), 55-60. Available ABI/Inform 94-74342.

Case, R. (1994). Our crude handling of educational reforms: The case of curricular integration. Canadian Journal of Education, 19(1), 90-93.

Central Region Prior Learning Assessment Pilot Project Team.(nd). A practitioner's manual for the assessment of prior experiential learning: Principles, methods, and resources: So you have been asked to assess prior experiential learning. Ontario: Author.

Chapman, D.W., Blackburn, R.W., & Austin, A.E. (1983) Expanding analytic possibilities of Rokeach values data. Educational and Psychological Measurement, 43, 419-21.

Chickering, A.W. (1981). The modern American college. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Ciurczak, F.M., & Smith, E. (1984). Dogmatism, age and change: A perspective of a nurse practitioner program. Journal of Nursing Education, 23, 374-9.

Clough, B.S. (Ed.) (1990). Proceedings of the 9th annual conference of the Canadian association for study of Adult Education. Calgary, AB: University of Calgary.

Cohen, L., & Manion, L. (1989). Research methods in education. London, England: Routledge Press.

Coreau, R., Dawson, J., & Sigaty, B. (Eds.). (1994). Proceedings of the 13th annual conference of the Canadian

Association for the Study of Adult Education. Abbotsford, BC: University College of the Fraser Valley.

Coughlan, D. (1992). A person-centered approach to dealing with resistance to change. Leadership and Organization Development Journal 14(4), 10-14. Available ABI/Inform 94-23877.

Cunningham, J.B., Farquharson, J., & Hull, D. (1991). A profile of the human fears of technological change. Technological forecasting and social change, 40(4), 355-370.

Cross, K. P. (1981). Adults as learners. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Cross, K.P., & McCartan, A.M. (1984). Adult learning: State policies and institutional practices. ASHE-ERIC higher education research report No. 1. Washington, DC: Association for the Study of Higher Education.

Dagavarian, D.A. (1989, February). Portfolio assessment. Washington, D.C: American Association of State Colleges and Universities, AASCU ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project.

Davis, D.D. (1986). Managing technological innovation. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Davis, L. H. (1994). Relating work to adult higher education. The Journal of Continuing Higher Education, 42(1), 17-22.

Davis, L.J. (1993). Equating training to education. The Journal of Continuing Higher Education, 41(1), 34-38.

Day, W. (1992). Continuing education: British Columbia's colleges and institutes. Vancouver, BC: Centre for Policy Studies, University of British Columbia.

Dennison, J. D. (1992a). British Columbia education and training in historical perspective. in P. Gallagher, Report of the steering committee: British Columbia human resource development project.

Dennison, J. D. (1992b). Higher education in British Columbia, 1945-1992: Opportunity and diversity. Vancouver, BC: Unpublished paper, University of British Columbia.

Dennison, J.D. (1995). Challenge and opportunity: Canada's community colleges at the crossroads. Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press.

Desruisseau, P., & Ratelle, L. (1995, July 7). Canadian scholars debate credit transfer. Chronicle of Higher Education, p. A40.

Dickson, M. (1993, March). Initial opposition--won't portfolio assessment take away teacher autonomy? Paper presented at the Annual meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication. San Diego, CA.

Droegkamp, J., & Taylor, K. (1995). Prior learning assessment, critical self reflection, and reentry women's development. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 65, 29-35.

Drucker, P.F. (1994). The age of social transformation. Atlantic Monthly, 274(5), 53-94.

Easterby-Smith, M. (1987). Change and innovation in higher education: A role for corporate strategy? Higher Education, 16(1), 37-52.

Evans, N. (1992). Experiential learning: Its assessment and accreditation. New York, NY: Routledge.

Fiorelli, J.S., & Margolis, H. (1993). Managing and understanding large systems change: Guidelines for executives and change agents. Organization Development Journal 11(3), 1-13.

Fisher, V.A. (1991). An institutional evaluation of perceptions and expectations of a portfolio assessment program (life experience). Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Columbia University Teachers College, New York, NY.

Fletcher, D. B. (1994, April). Summary of symposium on prior learning assessment, Ottawa, March 22, 1994. Ottawa, ON: Occupational and Career Information Branch, Employment and Immigration Canada.

Floyd, C.E. (1986). Faculty participation in decision making. Washington, DC: Association for the Study of Higher Education, (ERIC Digest ED 284520).

Ford, M.P., & Ohlhausen, M.M. (1991, December). Portfolio assessment in teacher education courses: Impact on students' beliefs, attitudes, and habits. Paper presented at the 41st annual meeting of the National Reading Conference, Palm Springs, CA.

Fowler, F.J., Jr. (1993). Survey research methods. (2nd edition). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Foxx, D.L., Jr. (1990, Spring). The proseminar. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 45, 49-58.

French, W. L., & Bell, Jr., C. H. (1990). Organization development: Behavioral science interventions for organizational improvement. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Fullan, M. (1993). Change forces: Probing the depth of educational reform. New York, NY: Falmer, Press.

Gaertner, K.N. (1989). Winning and losing: Understanding managers' reactions to strategic change. Human Relations, 42(6), 527-545.

Gallagher, P. (1992, November). Report of the steering committee: British Columbia human resource development project.

Gamson, Z. F. (1989). Higher education and the real world. Wolfeboro, NH: Longwood Academic.

Gilley, J.W., Fulmer, K.A. & Reithlingshoefer, S.J. (1986). Searching for academic excellence: Twenty colleges and universities on the move and their leaders. New York, NY: McMillan and the American Council on Education.

Goldman, B.A., & Flake, W.L. (1992). The Battery of interpersonal capabilities and Rokeach's Dogmatism scale: Is there a relationship? Psychological Reports, 71(1), 104-106.

Golemo, M.B. (1990). Celebrating change: Overcoming resistance to change. Campus Activities Programming, 23(3), 44-48.

Grant, J., & Gale, R. (1989). Changing medical education. Medical Education, 2(3), 252-257.

Greenwald, Mark (nd). Methods of assessment. Unpublished paper. Montreal, PQ: Vanier College.

Guba, E.G. & Lincoln, Y.S. (1981). Effective evaluation. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Hall, J.W. (1991). Access through innovation. New York, NY: American Council on Education and Macmillan.

Harriger, C.A. (1991). Barriers to the optimal use of prior learning assessment: An institutional evaluation of perceptions of credit for prior learning. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Columbia University Teachers College, New York, NY.

Hawkinshire V., F.B.W., & Liggett, Jr., (1990). W.A. Lewin's paradigm of planned change: Theory and application. In S.A. Wheelan, E. Pepitone, & V. Abt (Eds).(pp. 312-333). Advances in field theory. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Hayes, M.J. (1994). Prior learning assessment and portfolio development in the New college program at St. Edwards' University. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The University of Texas, Austin, TX.

Heany, B. (1990). The assessment of educational outcomes. Los Angeles, CA: Eric Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges (ERIC Digest ED 321834).

Heller, S. (1988, September 7). Universities grapple with academic politics as they strive to change their curricula. Chronicle of Higher Education, 35, A12-13.

Henry, J., & Walker, D. (Eds.). (1991). Managing innovation. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications and the Open University Press.

Herling, T.J. (1994, August). Resistance to the adoption of computer communication technology by communication faculty. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Atlanta, GA.

Hershey, H. G. (1986). The impediments to curricular change. Journal of Dental Education, 50(2), 102-106.

Hexter, H., & Andersen, C.J. (1986). Admission and credit policies for adult learners. Higher Education Panel Report Number 72, Washington, DC: American Council of Education.

Hopkins, K.D., & Gullickson, A.R. (1992). Response rates in survey research: A meta-analysis of the effects of monetary gratuities. Journal of Experimental Education, 61(1), 52-62.

Houle, C.O. (1984a). Continuing learning in the professions. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Houle, C.O. (1984b). Patterns of learning. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Hoyle, E. (1988). Micropolitics of educational organizations. In A. Westoby (Ed.) Culture and power in educational organizations (pp. 255-269). Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.

Hurt, H.T. (1977). Innovativeness scale. Human Communication Research, 4(1), 58-65.

Isabelle, L. (1994). Prior learning assessment in Canada: A review. Human Resources Development Canada, Ottawa, ON: Unpublished paper.

Jaeger, R. M. (Ed.). (1988). Complementary methods for research in education. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.

Jenkins, D. D. (1990). Degree course credit for continuing education course work. Canadian Journal of University Continuing Education, 15(1), 39-50.

Johnstone, D.B. (1988, October). Renovating innovation: The challenge of maturity in the innovative college. Paper presented at the 8th National Conference on Adult and External Degree Programs, Washington, DC.

Johnston, J.R., & Marcus, L.R. (1986). Blue ribbon commissions and higher education: Changing academe from the outside. ASHE-ERIC higher education report No.2. Washington, DC: Association for the Study of Higher Education.

Jones, P. (1995, August). Musings from Harrison. Unpublished paper, University College of the Fraser Valley, Abbotsford, BC.

Jutice, D.O. (1990). Prior learning assessment faces new wave of criticism. CAEL News, 13, p. 5.

Kazoleas, D. (1993). The impact of argumentativeness on resistance to persuasion. Human Communication Research, 20(1), 118-137.

Keeton, M. T. (1976). Experiential learning: Rationale, characteristics, and assessment. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Kerlin, S.P., & Dunlap, D.M. (1993). For richer, for poorer: Faculty morale in periods of austerity and retrenchment. Journal of Higher Education, 64(3).

King, N., Anderson, N., & West, M.A. (1991). Organizational innovation in the UK: A case study of perceptions and processes. Work and Stress, 5(4), 331-339.

Knapp, J. (1977). Assessing prior learning. Chicago, IL: Council for Adult and Experiential Learning.

Knapp, J. (1981) (Ed.). New directions for experiential learning: Financing and implementing prior learning assessment. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Knowles, M. (1984). Andragogy in action. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Knowles, M. (1986). Using learning contracts. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Koenig, C., & Wolfson, G. (1994). Prior learning assessment in British Columbia: An orientation for postsecondary institutions. Burnaby, BC: Open Learning Agency Press.

Kolb, D. A. (1984). Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Kozma, R.B. (1985). A grounded theory of instructional innovation in higher education. The Journal of Higher Education, 56(3), 300-319.

Kytle, J., & Zencey, E. (1994). Of cars, horses, and trojan gifts: The transformative task of prior learning assessment. CAEL Forum and News, 17(2), 7-10.

Lamdin, L. (Ed.). (1991). Roads to the learning society. Chicago, IL: Council for Adult and Experiential Learning.

Lamdin, L. (1992). Earn college credit for what you know. Chicago, IL: Council for Adult and Experiential Learning.

Landau, J. (1993). Organizational change and barriers to innovation: A case study in the Italian public sector. Human Relations, 46(12), 1411-1429.

Levine, A. (1980). Why innovation fails. Albany, NY: State University Press of New York.

Levine A., & Associates (1989). Shaping higher education's future. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Lewin, K. (1951). Field theory in social science. New York, NY: Harper.

Lippitt, R. (1981). Humanizing planned changes. In H. Meltzer & W.R. Nord (Eds.) Making organizations human and productive, a handbook for practitioners (pp. 463-474). New York, NY: Wiley.

Lippitt, G.L., Langseth, P. & Mossop, J. (1986). Implementing organizational change. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Litterst, J.K. (1990, April). Communication competency assessment of non-traditional students. ACA Bulletin, 72, 60-67.

Logan, C.S., & Pounder, D.G. (1989, October). Limitations on Change: Current conditions influencing academic intransigence in educational administration programs. Paper presented at the annual Meeting of the University Council for Educational Administration, Scottsdale, AZ.

Lutzen, K., Nordin, C., & Brolin, G. (1994). Conceptualization and instrumentation of nurses' moral sensitivity in psychiatric practice. International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research, 4(4), 241-248.

MacTaggart, T.J. (1994, March). Improving System-Campus relationships: Seven Principles. Paper presented at the Annual

Meeting of the American Association for Higher Education, Chicago, IL.

Mandell, A., & Michelson, E. (1990). Portfolio development and adult learning: Purposes and strategies. Chicago, IL: Council for Adult and Experiential Learning.

Mann, C.M. (1993). Credit for lifelong learning. Bloomington, IN: Tichenor Publishing.

Marsick, V.J. & Watkins, K.E. (1994). The learning organization: An integrative vision for HRD. Human Resource Development Quarterly, 5(4), 353-60.

Martorana, S.V., & Kuhns, E. (1975). Managing academic change. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Maslen, G. (1995, July 21). Australia's government plans agency to oversee transfer of academic credit. Chronicle of Higher Education, p. A38.

Massy, W.F, Wilger, A.K., & Colbeck, C. (1994). Overcoming "hallowed" collegiality. Change, 26(4), 10-20. (Available First Search 0202313).

McCormick, D. W. (1990). The painful emotions of prior experiential learning assessment. Adult Learning, 2(2), 26.

McCormick, D. W. (1993). College level learning and prior experiential learning assessment. Adult Learning, 4(1), 20-22.

McGill, I., & Weil, S. (1990). Making sense of experiential learning. Adults Learning (England) 1(5), 36-39.

McGivney, V. (1993). Women, education, and training: Barriers to Access, informal starting points and progression routes. Leicester, England, National Institute of Adult Continuing Education.

McGuinness, K. (Ed.). (1987, May). Non-traditional and interdisciplinary programs: Selected papers from the 5th annual Conference of Non-traditional and Interdisciplinary Programs, Fairfax, GA: George Mason University.

Meek, V.L. & Goedegebuure, L.C.J. (Eds.) (1991). Policy Changes in Higher education: A symposium. Higher Education, 21, 451-634.

Merlo, A.V. (1985, February/March). The relationship between dogmatism and choice of the criminal justice major. The High School Journal 68, 167-172.

Merriam, S.B, & Cunningham, P.M. (Eds.). (1989). Handbook of adult and continuing education. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Meyer, P. (1975). Awarding college credit for non-college learning. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Miller, M., & Daloz, L.A. (1989). Assessment of prior learning: Good practices assure congruity between work and education. Equity and Excellence, 24(3), 30-34.

Ministry of Advanced Education, Training, and Technology (1991). Forces of change influencing education and training. Victoria, BC: Author.

Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour (1995, October). Charting a new course. Victoria, BC: Author.

Mockler, D.W. & Spear, G.E. (1982). Lifelong learning: Formal, nonformal, informal, and self directed. Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education (Eric Document Reproduction Service, Document ED 220 723).

Mogee, M.E. (1993). Educating innovation managers: Strategic issues for business and higher education. IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management, 40(4), 410-418.

Mohrman, A.M., & Mohran, S., Ledford, G.E., Cummings, T.G., & Lawler, E.E. (Eds.). (1989). Large-scale organizational change. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Monge, P.R., Cozzens, M.D., & Contractor, N.S., (1992). Communication and motivational predictors of the dynamics of organizational innovation. Organization Science 3(2), 250-274.

Moore-West, M., Harrington, D.L., Mennin, S.P., & Kaufman, A. (1989). Distress and attitudes toward the learning environment: Effects of a curriculum innovation. Teaching and Learning in Medicine, 1(3) 151-157.

Morin, L. (1994, May). Prior learning assessment update. Victoria, BC: British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer.

Mulligan, J., & Griffin, C. (Eds.). (1992). Empowerment through Experiential Learning: Explorations of good practice. Bristol, PA: Taylor and Francis.

Newmann, F.M., Rutter, R.A., & Smith, S. (1989). Organizational factors that affect school sense of efficacy, community, and expectations. Sociology of Education, 62(4) 221-238.

1992 national conference on the adult learner: Programs to attract, retain, and educate older students. (1992, May). Conference Proceedings, University of South Carolina, Division of Continuing Education, Columbia, SC.

O'Banion, T. (1994). Sustaining innovation in teaching and learning. Leadership Abstracts 7(4). Available Online.

O'Grady, M.J. (1991). Assessment of prior achievement/assessment of prior learning: Issues of assessment and accreditation. Vocational Aspect of Education 43(115), 183-189.

Ontario Council of Regent's Prior Learning Assessment Advisory Committee. (1992, July). Final Report to the Minister of Colleges and Universities. Prior learning assessment: Enhancing the access of adult learner's to Ontario's colleges. Toronto, ON: Council of Regents.

Ontario Council of Regents (1993, November). Prior learning assessment in Ontario's colleges. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Labour Force Development Board.

Patton, M. Q. (1987). How to use qualitative methods in evaluation. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Pearce, S.D. (1993, Fall). Internal barriers to visionary leadership in university continuing education units. Canadian Journal of University Continuing Education, 19(2), 9-24.

Peinovich, P.E. (1994). The time is now: Quality for a new paradigm. CAEL Forum and News 17(2), 15-18.

Perry, Jr., R.E. (1988). A demographic study of possible factors that affect attitudes of public school board members toward educational practices and their resistance toward change. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of South Carolina, Charleston, SC.

Peruniak, G. S. (1989, November). Final report of the experimental project for the assessment of prior learning. Unpublished paper, Athabasca, AB: Athabasca University.

Peruniak, G. S. (1993). The promise of experiential learning and challenges to its integrity by prior learning assessment. Canadian Journal of University Continuing Education, 24(1) 7-29.

Peters, R. (1994). Accountability and the end(s) of higher education. Change, 26(6), 8 pp. (Available NSU Electronic collection A 15941149).

Prior learning assessment: A program for college wide implementation. (1993, May). Unpublished paper. Ottawa, ON: Algonquin College Project Team on Prior Learning Assessment.

Private Post-Secondary Education Act. Chapter 64, Index chap 337.3, 1990. Province of British Columbia.

Ram, S. (1987). A model of innovation resistance. Advances in Consumer Research, 14, 209-212.

Raulf, J. F. (1992). An institutional evaluation of perceptions and expectations of prior learning assessment programs (adult learners). Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Columbia University Teacher's College, New York, NY.

Reilly, A.H. (1992). Understanding resistance to change: The Jefferson company exercise. Journal of Management Education, 16(3), 314-326.

Reynolds, L. (1994). Understand employees resistance to change. Human Relations Focus, 71(6), 17-29.

Rhoades, G. (1987). Higher education in a consumer society. Journal of Higher Education 58(1), 1-24.

Rogers, E. M. (1983). Diffusion of innovations. New York: The Free Press, McMillan Publishing.

Rogers, E.M., & Shoemaker, F.F. (1971). Communication of innovation. New York, NY. Free Press.

Rokeach, M. (1960). The open and closed mind. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Rolls, D.M. (1987, April). Documenting experiential learning: Preparation of a portfolio for college credit. Lifelong Learning 10(6), 19-21.

Rose, A.D. (1991). Preparing for veterans: Higher education and the efforts to accredit the learning of World War II servicemen and women. Adult Education Quarterly, 42(1), 30-45.

Rubenson, K. (1989). The sociology of adult education. In S.B. Merriam & P.K. Cunningham (Eds.). Handbook of adult and continuing education (pp. 51-69). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Sansregret, M. (1989). Prior learning assessment: An interesting challenge for the next decade. In R. Bedard (Ed.) Proceedings of the 8th annual conference of the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education, pp. 272 -276. Guelph, ON: University of Guelph.

Sansregret, M. (1993). Prior learning assessment: The portfolio. Montreal, PQ: Hurtubise HMH Ltd.

Sauer, J., & Anderson, N. (1992). Have we misread the psychology of innovation? A case study from two NIS hospitals. Leadership and Organizational Development Journal, 13(2), 17-21.

Schlossberg, N.K., Lynch, A.Q., & Chickering, A.W. (1989). Improving higher education environments for adults. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Schroeder, L. Council of Adult and Experiential Learning Forum and News, 17(1).

Schumacher, S., & McMillan, J.H. (1993). Research in education. New York, NY: Harper Collins College Publishers.

Selman, G. (1991). Citizenship and the adult education movement in Canada. Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia, Centre for Continuing Education.

Selway, I., & McHale, C. (1994). Collaboration between higher education and professional education and training systems: A view from the change agents. Studies in Continuing Education, 16(1), 19-36.

Seymour, D.T. (1988). Developing academic programs: The climate for innovation. ASHE-ERIC higher education report No. 3. Washington, DC: Association for the Study of Higher Education.

Shah, P., & Witter, S. (1995, May). Education and training presentation to the BC Labour Force Development Board. Unpublished paper, Abbotsford, BC: University College of the Fraser Valley.

Sherritt, C.A. (1992). Forum: The hidden agendas of distance education. Journal of Adult Education 21(2), 31-35.

Siegfried, J. J., Getz, M., & Anderson, K.H. (May 19, 1995). The snail's pace of innovation in higher education. The Chronicle of Higher Education.

Simosko, S. (1985). Earn college credit for what you know. Washington, DC: Acropolis Books.

Simosko, S. & Associates (1988). Assessing learning: A CAEL handbook for faculty. Chicago, IL: Council for Adult and Experiential Learning.

Simsek, H., & Louis, K.S. (1994). Organizational change as paradigm shift: Analysis of the change process in a large, public university. Journal of Higher Education, 64(6). Available on-line.

Sinclair, J., & Collins, D. (1992). New skills for workers. Leadership and Organization Development Journal, 13(3) 3-32.

Slowey, M. (Ed.) (1995). Implementing change from within universities and colleges: 10 personal accounts. London, England: Kogan Page Ltd.

Sparks, P.M. (1994). Where is nontraditional education going? Exploring the dynamics of change. The Journal of Continuing Higher Education, 41(1), 23-33.

Squier, S. A. (1992). College administrator's perceptions of factors affecting interinstitutional agreements (partnerships). Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Colorado State University, Boulder, CO.

Stevens, G. L. (1993). An examination of level four evaluation in the context of Rogers' innovation-decision process model. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL.

Stewart, D.W. & Spille, H.A. (1988). Diploma mills: Degrees of fraud. New York, NY: American Council on Education and Macmillan Publishing Co.

Storey, G. S. (July , 1995). Private post secondary education commission. Perspectives, 17(3), 7. Vancouver, BC: British Columbia Association of Social Workers.

Strebel, P. (1994). Choosing the right change path. California Management Review 36(2) 29-51. Available ABI/Inform #95-02195

Sullivan, E. (1993). The adult learner's guide to alternative and external degree programs. Phoenix, AZ: American Council on Education, Series on Higher Education, Oryx Press.

Surma, N.A. (1993). A regional council for the education of automotive workers: A study in interorganization relations between higher education and industry. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Boston College, Boston, MA.

Sweet, R. (1992, June). Private vocational training schools: Their role in post-secondary education. Paper presented at the Canadian Society for the Study of Education Conference, Charlottetown, PEI.

Swiczewicz, Jr., L. M. (1990). Segmentation and penetration of prior learning assessment methodologies at American colleges and universities. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT.

Taylor, M., & Bedard R. (1992) (Eds). Proceedings of the 11th annual conference of the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education. Saskatoon, SK, College of Education, University of Saskatchewan.

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (1977). Mission of the College curriculum: A contemporary view with suggestions. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Thomas, A.M. (1989) Bridging the gap in both directions. In R. Bedard (Ed.) Proceedings of the 8th annual conference of the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education, pp. 224-231. Guelph, ON: University of Guelph.

Thomas, A., & Klaiman, R. (1992). The utilization of prior learning assessment in Canada. Canadian Journal of University Continuing Education, 28(1), 14-26.

Thomas, A.M. (1995a). The current status of prior learning assessment in Canada. Paper presented at the National Forum on Prior Learning Assessment, Ottawa, ON.

Thomas, A.M. (1995b). The tolerable contradictions of prior learning assessment. Paper presented at the National Forum on Prior Learning Assessment, Ottawa, ON.

Tough, A. (1978). Major learning efforts: Recent research and future directions. Adult Education, 28(4), 250-263.

Tough, A. (1979). The Adults' learning experience. Toronto, ON: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education Press.

Tough, A. (1991). Beyond education. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Turner, C.M. (1990). Responding to change: The need for flexible college structures and practices. Mendip Papers 005. Bristol, England: The Further Education Staff College.

University College of the Fraser Valley (1994). University College of the Fraser Valley Calendar: 1994/5. Abbotsford, BC: University College of the Fraser Valley, Author.

Varcoe, K. E. (1994). Book of readings for societal factors affecting education. Fort Lauderdale, FL: Nova Southeastern University, Programs for Higher Education.

Wadsworth, D. (1994, March). Listening to the public: The key to a constructive debate about higher education. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association for Higher Education, Chicago, IL. Available Eric Document Reproduction Service ED 368 247.

Wagemans, L., & Dochy, F. (1991). Principles in the use of experiential learning as a source of prior knowledge. Distance Education, 12(1), 85-108.

Waldron, M. W., & Moore, G. A. B. (1991). Helping adults learn. Toronto, ON: Thompson Educational Publishing.

Werner, T.J. & Lynch, R.F. (1994). Challenges of a change agent. Journal for Quality and Participation, 17(3), 50-53. Available ABI/Inform 94-42827.

Westoby, E. (Ed.). (1988). Culture and power in educational organizations. Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.

Wheelan, S.A., Pepitone, E., & Abt, V. (Eds). (1990). Advances in field theory. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Whitaker, U. (1989). Assessing learning: Standards, principles, and procedures. Chicago, IL: Council of Adult and Experiential Learning.

Wolfson, G. K. (1995). Prior learning assessment at UCFV. Unpublished paper, Abbotsford, BC: University College of the Fraser Valley.

Wolfson, G.K. (1996). The seamless flow. Teaching in the Community Colleges (Electronic) Journal 1(1). Available ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education (ED 386 120).

Yin, R. K. (1989). Case study research: Design and methods. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

APPENDIXES

Appendix A

UCFV Policy 340.23

Prior Learning Assessment Policy (March, 1993)

Policy:
UCFV recognizes that adult learners acquire knowledge and skills through life and work experience. Through prior learning assessment, UCFV will assess this knowledge and skills and will grant credits for the learning that took place.

Guidelines:
Applicants requesting PLA must be admitted to a certificate, diploma, or degree program before PLA will proceed.

All learners considering PLA will participate in a course designed to prepare them for the prior learning assessment.

The learner has the primary responsibility for preparing the evidence that college-creditable learning has taken place and that it contributes to an appropriate balance of theory and practical application.

UCFV will award credit only for prior learning which is documented in a portfolio and which is at college level. This process challenges learners to claim and articulate their knowledge, skills, abilities, and values based on documentation that describes learning or provides evidence of learning on a course-by-course basis.

The portfolio should demonstrate to the assessor that the learner meets the course objectives or learning outcomes of the particular course for which she/he is seeking credit.

Challenge examinations rather than portfolio assessment are most appropriate to determine credit for courses that are highly theoretical. However, students should prepare a portfolio so that their prior learning may be evaluated against the course requirements. If the Faculty assessor agrees that there is some similarity, then the student would be encouraged to request a challenge examination.

Learners who receive an unfavourable decision from the faculty assessor will have access to UCFV's appeal process.

Prior learning will be assessed only by faculty who have expertise in the area to be assessed.

The Faculty Assessor will be responsible for ensuring that the documentation provided by the learner supports the claim for credit. If the assessor believes that the knowledge the learner has demonstrated is sufficient and appropriate for each course the learner has specified, the recommendation will be that credit be awarded.

The courses for which credit is given will use the same grading scheme as similar courses taught on a scheduled basis.

UCFV will award credit for prior learning which is directly applicable to the UCFV program to which the student has been admitted. Credit awarded will not necessarily be transferred to other degree programs or institutions.

The student's transcript will show that credit has been earned through PLA.

Normally no more than 25% of the credits required in a program will be awarded for prior learning.

Appendix B

UCFV Policy 340.23 (Revised)

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition)

Policy
UCFV recognizes that adult learners acquire knowledge though life and work experience. Through a prior learning assessment process, such learning can be assessed and appropriate credits can be granted.

Definition
Prior learning assessment (PLA) is defined as a process of assessment by some valid and reliable means, by a qualified specialist, of what has been learned that is worthy of credit in a course or program offered by the institution providing the credit. PLA is used to evaluate learning which may have been achieved through work experience, independent reading, hobbies, volunteer work, informal and nonformal learning, travel, artistic pursuits, or other activities. PLA may be used to relate that prior learning to the educational goal pursued by the learner.

UCFV offers PLA candidates several methods of documenting and demonstrating that they have achieved a level of learning equivalent to that which would normally be acquired through formal study in the public postsecondary system. The methods include, but are not limited to, course challenge, portfolio assessment, and assessment of credentials earned. No one PLA method is best for any or all situations. Methods should be selected to suit the unique needs of the particular situation.

Guidelines
Applicants requesting PLA must be admitted to UCFV before PLA will proceed.

UCFV will award credit only for prior learning which is documented and which is at college level. PLA is based on documentation that describes learning or provides evidence of learning.

Prior learning will be assessed only by faculty who have expertise in the area to be assessed.

Faculty will determine the PLA process and grading procedures most appropriate for their program, discipline, and courses.

The faculty assessor will be responsible for ensuring that the documentation provided by the learner supports the claim for credit. If the assessor believe that the knowledge the learner has demonstrated is sufficient and appropriate, the recommendation will be that credit be awarded.

Learners who receive an unfavourable decision from the Faculty Assessor will have access to UCFV's appeal process.

UCFV will award credit for prior learning which is directly applicable to the UCFV program in which the student intends to graduate. Credit awarded will not necessarily be transferred to other programs or institutions.

The learner's transcript will show that credit has been earned through PLA.

New UCFV Policy xxx.xx

Portfolio Assessment

Policy

Portfolio assessment is a process by which learners articulate and document their learning in a portfolio format. Learners at UCFV are offered the opportunity to request assessment and recognition of their prior learning through the portfolio assessment method of prior learning assessment (PLA).

Guidelines

All learners considering portfolio assessment are strongly encouraged to participate in a short orientation seminar followed, for some, by a more comprehensive course to prepare them for the assessment.

The learner has the primary responsibility for preparing the evidence that college creditable learning has taken place and that it contributes to an appropriate blend of theory and practical application.

The portfolio should demonstrate to the assessor that the learner meets the objectives or learning outcomes identified by the department or program. The portfolio will be submitted to the faculty assessor/s via the PLA facilitator.

Normally no more than twenty-five percent (25%) of the credits required in a program will be awarded for learning which is demonstrated and documented in a portfolio.

The portfolio will include:

a) a chronological record detailing significant activities including work experience, volunteer experience, and nonformal learning.

b) a paper detailing educational and career goals.

c) a description of competencies, knowledge, and skills.

d) documentation such as job descriptions, performance appraisals, transcripts, samples of work, testimonials, certificates of attendance, previous credentials and awards.

e) a narrative that will convey to the assessor that the learner has the knowledge applicable to the course description under assessment.

f) other materials that document evidence of the learner's knowledge of the assessed subject area.

Appendix C

Characteristics of Adult Learners

In planning programs for adult learners and in considering the needs of adult learners to have their life and work experience recognized (and in doing so validated), educators have to be cognizant of the characteristics of adult learners.

Research has indicated that the following (Cross,1981) are characteristic of adult learners:

-much of what adults learn outside of formal educational settings may be equated to postsecondary level learning and should be formally recognized as such

-what is learned is more important to adults than the setting in which it was learned

-adults often learn more in/from informal settings than they do in formal settings

-adults learn knowledge/skills not for their intrinsic worth but for the ability of the knowledge/skills to help solve current problems

-adults have acquired the ability to learn from experiences

-individual adults learn similar things in very different ways and settings (i.e., on an individual basis)

-adults require educators who are responsive to their diverse needs and to the fact that adults come from a wide variety of diverse backgrounds, cultures, and circumstances

-adults have other roles, responsibilities, and commitments that compete with education for their time and attention

-the process of active assessment promotes learning.

Appendix D

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF THE FRASER VALLEY
Prior Learning Assessment Survey

Section I - Background Information: *please complete this section before proceeding to Section II.*

1. Age: _____ 2. Gender: ___ male ___ female

3. What year did you first start professional employment at UCFV?____

4. Please review the types of credentials listed below. For those that apply, please check and list the date of completion.
_____college diploma or certificate Year completed_____
_____baccalaureate degree Year completed_____
_____master's degree Year completed_____
_____doctoral degree Year completed_____
_____trades qualification Year completed_____
_____Other (please specify)______________ Year completed_____

5. Are you currently enroled in an educational program? Yes_____ No_____
If yes, please check all that apply:
_____diploma or certificate _____baccalaureate degree
_____master's program _____doctoral program?
_____continuing education courses
_____Other (please specify)___________________________

6. Are you (check one):
_____teaching faculty _____program or department head
_____non teaching faculty _____administration
_____Other (please specify ______________

7. Your department or program:____

8. Area of College: (please check all that apply):
____Arts ____Careers ____Science & Technology
____Access & Continuing Ed ____Library ____Student Services
____Other (please specify)______________________

9. What credentials are offered by your department? (please check all that apply)
____none ____certificate
____continuing education certificate _____diploma or associate degree
____four year degree ____Other (please specify)____________________

Section II - Prior Learning Knowledge and Attitudes. *Before answering the questions in this section, please read the following brief definitions for the terms that are used.*

Block credit is the term used for equating a credential from another educational setting towards a specified number of credits at UCFV without specific course credits.

Course challenge is a system of evaluation, prepared by the course instructor, that measures student knowledge of course content in order to award credit to students who have not attended the course.

Formal learning is that which has occurred through taking a structured credit course. **Informal (or non-formal) learning** refers to skills and knowledge acquired in situations other than formal study.

Portfolio assisted assessment is a system by which learning is assessed, for credit, through a file or folder of information that systematically documents an individual's learning experiences and accomplishments.

Prior learning assessment is the process of assessing learning, acquired elsewhere, for credit at a postsecondary institution.

Transfer credit is the awarding of comparable credit by a postsecondary institution for course or program credit gained at another postsecondary institution.

10. Has any of your previous educational experience involved gaining credit through the following? (please check all that apply)

____transfer of credits
____portfolio assessment
____block credit for another credential
____self directed study
____standardized exams
____course challenge

11. Have you attended any of the B.C Council on Admissions and Transfer prior learning assessment workshops or forums?
Yes ___ No ____ If yes, how many? (please circle) 1 2 3 4 5+

12. Have you attended any of the UCFV workshops/forums on prior learning assessment?
Yes____ No ____ If yes, how many? (please circle) 1 2 3 4 5+

13. Have you read the provincial prior learning manuals? Yes____ No____

14. Have any students in your department been awarded credits for prior learning during the 94/5 academic year? Yes____ No____Don't know____
If yes, how many students do you estimate were involved?________

15. Have you been personally involved in granting prior learning assessment credit to a student? Yes_____ No_____

If yes, how was it awarded? (check all that apply).

_____course challenge
_____standardized exam
_____advanced placement
_____Other (please specify)______________
_____portfolio assessment
_____transfer credits
_____exemption from courses

16. Please list, in the space below, the names of up to five people whom you consider to be leaders in the prior learning assessment movement at UCFV.

Section III - Prior Learning Assessment Opinions and Knowledge

Using the scales below each item, circle the number on the scale that best describes yourself.

17. What is your **level of awareness of the UCFV policy** on prior learning assessment?
______1______2______3______4______5______6______7______8______9______10
completely unaware moderately aware totally aware

18. What do you see as your **level of knowledge of prior learning assessment** methodologies?
______1______2______3______4______5______6______7______8______9______10
non-existent fairly familiar expert

19. What is your **personal level of support** for prior learning assessment activities at UCFV?
______1______2______3______4______5______6______7______8______9______10
not supportive supportive, but have reservations very supportive

20. How often has prior learning assessment been **discussed in department meetings?**
______1______2______3______4______5______6______7______8______9______10
never rarely occasionally every meeting

21. How would you rate the **level of departmental support** for prior learning assessment?
______1______2______3______4______5______6______7______8______9______10
none moderate high

Using the rating scale provided under each item, please circle the alternative that best describes your opinion.

22. The amount of credit available through prior learning assessment should be **linked to the length of the program.**

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

23. Prior learning assessment credit is **suitable only for lower level** courses/programs.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

24. Prior learning assessment credit is **suitable only for upper level** courses/programs.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

25. Prior learning assessment credit is **suitable regardless of the level** of the course/program.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

26. Prior learning assessment credit is **suitable for all** courses regardless of program.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

27. Prior learning assessment is **suitable for only some** programs, disciplines, and courses.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

28. Prior leaning assessment is **suitable for trades and vocational** programs.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

29. Prior learning assessment is **suitable for arts** programs, courses, and disciplines.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

30. Prior learning assessment is **suitable for science** programs, courses, and disciplines.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

31. Prior learning assessment is **suitable for adult basic education** courses and programs.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

32. Prior learning assessment is **suitable for career** programs, courses and disciplines.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

33. Credit for the **courses I teach** should be available through PLA processes.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Please use the balance of this sheet to write any comments that you have that you think would be helpful in understanding your attitudes, knowledge, and opinions about prior learning assessment and its implementation at UCFV.

If you would like to receive a copy of the findings, please sign your name.

____
Name

Thank you very much for your cooperation. Please return the completed questionnaire to Gloria Wolfson on the Abbotsford campus.

Appendix E

Letters Accompanying Survey

Initial Letter

September 28, 1995

Dear UCFV Faculty Member:

Gloria Wolfson is doing her doctoral research is on the implementation of a program for prior learning assessment at University College of the Fraser Valley. As part of this research, and in order to make recommendations for change and improvement of the program, we are interested in finding out what you know and think about prior learning assessment at UCFV. The information that you provide will be used to help improve and/or restructure the program.

Gloria is trying to determine what faculty attitudes are towards prior learning assessment as well as the general level of faculty knowledge and support of prior learning assessment. In addition, we are trying to determine how faculty have been involved with prior learning assessment activities either with students or in their own educational experience. You can help answer these questions by completing the brief questionnaire enclosed with this letter. Just a little of your time is required; it should not take more than fifteen minutes. Please return the questionnaire to Gloria Wolfson through inter-office mail.

Please be assured that your answer will be treated with complete confidentiality. The questionnaire has been numbered for mailing purposes only. This is done so that your name can be checked off the list when your questionnaire is returned. Your name will never be placed on the questionnaire unless you do so yourself and individual responses will never be identified as such.

The results of this research will be presented to the PLA steering committee at UCFV. If you would like a copy of the results, please indicate it on the questionnaire on the last page.

If you have any questions, or need further information in order to complete the questionnaire, please call Gloria at 854-4560 (office) or 859-1943 (home) or by email as (wolfson@ucfv.bc.ca). It would be appreciated if you would complete the questionnaire as quickly as possible and return it within the week. Thank you for your prompt response.

Sincerely yours,

Susan Witter
Dean of Access and Continuing Education

Follow-up Letter

October 12, 1995

Dear UCFV Faculty Member:

Several weeks ago, you were sent a questionnaire and a letter by Susan Witter regarding my dissertation research on the implementation of a program for prior learning assessment (PLA) at UCFV. Your response is very important to this research.

Your response to the questionnaire will help us in determining what faculty attitudes are towards PLA; the general level of faculty knowledge and support of PLA; and how faculty have been involved with PLA activities with students or in their own educational experience. Even if you know little or nothing about PLA, your response will be very helpful.

PLA can be defined as the assessment for credit of college level learning acquired by adults outside of the non-formal system. This could include learning acquired through work experience, hobbies, employer sponsored training, volunteer experience, self directed learning, etc. The process of PLA uses a variety of tools to help learners reflect on, identify, articulate and demonstrate past learning and allows the evaluation of past learning against established academic standards so that credit can be awarded by a postsecondary institution.

It should only take about fifteen minutes of your time to complete the questionnaire and return it to me through inter-office mail. A copy of the questionnaire has been attached in case the original was misplaced or not received by you. Confidentiality is assured – questionnaires were numbered only for mailing purposes and both name and number are removed from the list when a response is received.

The results of this research will be presented to the PLA steering committee at UCFV and if you would like a copy of the results, please indicate it on the last page.

Thank you again for you prompt cooperation. If you have any questions, please call me at local 4560 (or 859-1943 at home), or by Email (wolfson@ucfv.bc.ca).

Sincerely yours,

Gloria Wolfson

Appendix F

Document and Meeting Summaries

Standing Committee on PLA, Minutes of Meetings

April 8, 1994. It was noted that UBC has no "strong interest on a campus wide basis."

September 23, 1994. Issues discussed included promoting the provincial handbooks that had been produced, support for the PLA training to be offered October 27 and 28, a discussion of the need for clarity around transcription issues, transfer issues, and FTE funding of PLA.

November 21, 1994. UCFV is finding that some students in the portfolio course are concluding that their learning best matches courses listed by other institutions – e.g., SFU or UBC who aren't willing to consider the portfolio for credit.

There is a need to educate industry regarding the meaning and implementation of PLA so that they don't expect credit for experience. The committee will be sponsoring PLA training meetings in the Spring.

April 24, 1995. Discussed the half time secondment that was to come from MSTL. Suggested that a practitioner (i.e., a faculty member doing assessments) be added to the committee. Discussed the purpose of the National Forum on Prior Learning Assessment and the British Columbia response.

August 25, 1995. MSTL's direction is that PLA becomes an integral part of the way colleges do business. MSTL seen as eager to have a provincial policy statement which should address misconceptions that PLA is exclusively concerned with portfolio assessment and hence is overly bureaucratized and not cost effective. Reports on the implementation grants for ten institutions.

Reports that MSTL has provided $24,000 for training and $40,000 for consulting to Centre for Curriculum Development. MSTL has also provided money for a half-time secondment to the committee and support for the PLA Practitioner's Working Group.

Discusses priorities for 1995–96 which include training relating PLA to employers, a train the trainer workshop, production of a strategic plan for PLA, consideration of longer term training plan, and a workshop in designing fair and reasonable challenge exams.

Need for research on PLA which includes quantitative and qualitative data regarding comparisons between PLA students with respect to grade point average and time to completion.

Pla Updates and Discussion Papers

Spring 1993. This initial document brought the issues surrounding PLA to British Columbia and suggested a forum involving representatives from all colleges, institutes,and universities in British Columbia be held to discuss the issues.

September 1993. This update defined PLA, and talked about possible applications within the system. Reported on the forum held in Spring of 1993, where while 93% thought it was time for PLA in the system, they were less enthusiastic (74%) about allowing transfer credit for PLA.

February, 1994. Basically provides an inventory of who is doing what in the province in PLA. Most of the activity is in human services, industrial technology, hospitality/tourism, applied business technology, computer systems. Basically there is limited activity

February, 1995. Discussed necessity for having PLA promotion and marketing, student orientation, and portfolio development courses. Identified the work that needs to be done on challenge exams and the necessity to incorporate challenge exam policy within a broader PLA policy. Suggested that transcription issues still need further discussion, especially around issues of transferability, so that there is some standard in the system. Identified the necessity for some funding for PLA within the system if it is to survive.

PLA Practitioners' Group Minutes

June 26 1995. Discussed difficulties getting together considering the distances involved. Group membership to include all PLA practitioners at BC institutions. Suggested that agenda for next meeting include drafting terms of reference. Also distributed a PLA inventory that was to be filled out by colleges.

September 8,1995.. Discussed training needs for PLA within the system. Training needed to focus on train the trainers, workplace based PLA, strategic directions for PLA and identifying best practices for PLA. Need to develop electronic media on PLA. Development of a network was discussed as well as issues around payment for faculty assessment and the distribution from MSTL of implementation grants. The Registrar's of BC have made a decision as to how to record PLA on transcripts, discussion focused on whether the action should be reviewed since it contradicts the philosophy of not identifying PLA credit on transcripts as such. Other hot topics included a discussion of how to do PLA in a culturally sensitive way.

November 6, 1995. A sharing roundtable was conducted. Discussion of the various PLA models (i.e., what is happening at other institutions), development of a resource centre, and the necessity of evaluating PLA students and doing some follow-up.

UCFV PLA Working Group Minutes

December 1, 1994. Assessor training (provincial) workshops were reported on. Decision that assessment fee for portfolios will, on an interim basis, be the same as the tuition fee charged for the course for which credit is being requested. Agreement that the honoraria to be paid to the assessor would be $100 per portfolio, although it is not clear as to whether this is to be paid to the assessor or to the department. 23 students in the AD Ed 300 course preparing portfolios, but only 8 will be submitted for assessment. Requests for credit in : business administration, applied communications, computing science, human services, anthropology, and English. Ad Ed 300 will be renamed Ad Ed 200 and is available to any UCFV program student.

March 2, 1995. Assessor training to be held March 15-17, 1995. Need for more information from each department including (a) a list of strategies used to recognize students' prior learning, (b) a list of courses which are available for challenge, (c) list of courses which can be assessed by portfolio, and (d) the departmental contact person. Need for inhouse assessor training. Sample portfolios were available for viewing.

May 11, 1995. No portfolio assessments have yet been completed. Six portfolios are reported as being imminent in which a total of 29 credits have been requested. Work is slow, departments reluctant to get on board. Discussion of possibility of a comprehensive portfolio in which a student could request credit for more than one course per portfolio submission. This would necessitate change to present policy. In house assessor training suggested for Fall, 1995.

September 13, 1995. Update on submission of portfolios. To date, only three students have been successful. Most students prepared portfolios in Ad Ed 200/300 but their learning did not match courses offered at UCFV or the courses that their learning matched were not in their programs or the departments were resistant to portfolio assessment. Review of fee structure for portfolio assessment initiated as part of a larger college wide review of ancillary fees. Survey of current PLA practices at UCFV to be undertaken. Heavy demand on the PLA facilitator for information. There needs to be a section on PLA in the college calendar. Distribution of honoraria for assessors is at discretion of department. Discussion of policy changes needed which resulted in a new policy submission.

October 11, 1995. Review and discussion of new PLA policy and recognition that there needs to be two policies: one on PLA (general) and the second particularly on portfolio assisted assessment. The survey on PLA practices has been distributed to the departments. Planning for the Wednesday Forum on PLA to be held on November 8, 1995. Discussions on connection of PLA with workplace training.

Other Documents and Meetings

Memo from Kathryn Barker, Canadian Labour Force Development Board, November 1, 1995. This document makes it clear that the CFLDB is totally behind PLA. The document calls for renaming PLA as PLAR – Prior learning assessment and recognition. Stresses the point that there is a need in Canada to recognize credentials earned outside of the country, particularly abroad and that this may need to be done outside of the public educational system. The document calls for a national strategy in the context of education and training reform and claims "community is fractured into a confusing array of systems, levels, standards, and types of providers who are often competitors." Calls for the development of intra-provincial and pan-provincial articulation agreements.

Pacific Association for Continuing Education, October 27, 1995 John Dennison. Problem with PLA is that we still revert back to the autonomy of each institution and the emphasis is on individual rather than the articulated areas. Public institutions in Canada not accredited. Private institutions have two steps, registration and accreditation. Articulation of credits must happen, yet this is the business of the department. When the private institutions go through accreditation, it doesn't mean that their courses will get transfer credit. Many problems including different grading systems, and how students are identified. Also stated that PLA in British Columbia would have the highest level of successes in the university colleges, rather than in the colleges and universities, because they could offer their own degrees and not have to deal with the issue of transferability.

Susan Witter made four points. There needs to be better linkages between schools, colleges, and private institutions, as well as between high school and college. She believes that applied career area articulation has failed abysmally leading to enormous waste in the system. There are beginning steps in the public-private articulation process but public institutions resist where they see its not in their best interest. In order to fully implement PLA the system needs to have better learning outcomes.

Shawn Whitney, Lorraine Suomi (examiners for PPSA) spoke on accreditation of private training institutions. To be accredited, must be registered and in business for 1 year. Three institutions have been accredited so far (Canadian Travel School, Canadian International College, and Options Unlimited) two more are pending.

National Forum on Prior Learning Assessment, October 23-25, 1995.
Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) a federal department sponsored the first National Forum on Prior Learning Assessment. Originally the organizers believed that they would have a maximum of 300 participants. Over 800 people tried to attend the conference; given the constraints of space, the organizers were forced to cut off participation at 700. Participants came from all over Canada, from both the education sector and the business sector. This was considered to be an indication of the amount of interest in prior learning assessment at this time.

Alan Thomas (1995a) speaking on The Current Status of Prior Learning Assessment in Canada at the National Forum on PLA noted "PLA strikes at heart of education edifice and the people who are not here are beginning to realize this." He went on to note that PLA is really nothing new, it has had widespread use in the Canadian college and university system dating back to the 1950s. What is significant is for the first time, students have had a right to be assessed, "what was private, intuitive and casual before is now public and accountable." Demands for PLA are now growing, both from students and employers who want training offered in the workplace recognized.

Thomas noted PLA was more likely to happen in colleges rather than universities, because the colleges were an organized system while the universities were not. The universities "understood more poignantly exactly what PLA does--separates instruction from evaluation which cuts more deeply into the heart of the academic endeavour."

Thomas (1995a) notes that the common enigma in PLA has been the lack of student response. "The system assumed an avalanche which hasn't occurred." The resistance of faculty may also be reflected by students; this may be a form of learning that requires a sophistication far above what our students normally bring. He talked about faculty resistance to grading learning.

Thomas felt pushes of PLA would change the focus of the institution from one of accumulation of courses to the specification of program outcomes. In the future, educational institutions will be doing more program than individual evaluations.

Alan Thomas (1995b) in another speech on The Tolerable Contradictions of PLA to the National Forum sees a system which has previously defined itself as closed, self contained, and with success measured by exposure to the environment, determined by the system itself, with performance measured by individuals who designed the environment themselves, and who have jealously retained the right to do so. In this system, teaching is inseparable from evaluation and outcomes.

PLA makes special demands in separating evaluation from the teaching. While Thomas defines learning as an activity within itself, the PLA system demands that it be viewed as an outcome and one which can be measured.

Thomas goes on to note that the initiative in PLA in Canada has come largely from administrators. Yet the role of faculty is critical. PLA challenges the commonly accepted system of faculty giving grades and translating them into degrees. PLA "opens the gates and we're used to closing them." The resistance to PLA may stem from "our anxiety over standards (which we're always worried will go down) made in the past and not favouring portability."

Thomas is concerned that PLA, as it is currently applied may be more attractive to women than men. The skills that one needs in preparing a portfolio are more "human and relational" and may be more appropriate for women's ways of knowing. He sees this as a concern because "women on the already on the fringes of the institution." If women are the prime consumers of PLA, then PLA as an activity may be even more marginalized than it already is.

Richard Johnston former Ontario Chair of PLA Secretariat spoke to the need of PLA to be part of the culture of the institution. Less than 35% of the Canadian population has some postsecondary education. Enormous deficit of people without skills and a postsecondary system that is largely unaccountable. The challenges are to (a) learn from others and create a network (b) find ways of working together to have an impact on political decision making, (c) work on issues that need to be "pulled out" such as marketing of PLA, and (d) see PLA as investing in the future.

Joy Van Kleef and Louis Lizotte Ontario PLA Secretariat. "Trends, like horses, are easier to ride in the direction that they're going." Suggest creating an advisory committee within the college--get people who have influential power, get people who are resistant involved. "If you spend time in building consensus, then you can move people along, keep talking and talking and talking until you get consensus." There is a real need to provide financial provincial incentives for PLA. If you don't it won't become regularized (this is what happened in Quebec).

Morris Keaton. Decisions about PLA tend to be made at the departmental level, which means only about 10% of the departments actually do PLA. There are problems getting learners to understand the differences between claiming and documenting learning. Faculty need to understand that the portfolio doesn't have to be complete, it could be used as a basis for an oral exam. We need to find out more about cost effective ways of doing a portfolio. Maybe we could "give credit in pencil" until the student succeeds at the 2nd level? Problem is that people want to restrict that what is claimed in learning to what we teach in our courses. The first and biggest problem is that "we have to be as pure as Caesar's wife." Institutions that don't limit claims to course content will become diploma mills in short course.

Monica Collins, Wilfred Laurier University. Canadian Association of University and College Educators (CAUCE) task force on PLA feels continuing education is the best place to locate PLA because (a) it is situated well in the university, (b) networks closely and with non-traditional students, (c) has external linkages and a marketing network, and (d) is a one stop entry point. Cautions that universities need to be very clear about their motivation for PLA.

Canadian Labour Force Development Board (CLFDB). We must look at transfer of credits rather than PLA. PLA is demeaning for the adult learner who already has credentials from another country. Concerns that PLA will become the "cash cow" for portfolio development courses. These courses should be a means of assessing what has been done, rather than developing a plan.

PLA Visioning Workshop, October 18, 1995, Susan Simosko. Identified and distinguished between PLA advisors and their role in the institution and PLA assessors (faculty). The purpose of the visioning workshop was to

1. generate a coherent picture of PLA that can enable individuals to make best use of what they already know and can do to achieve academic, vocational, career or other goals

2. define the characteristics of an ideal postsecondary institution at which PLA is viewed as a natural entitlement of the diverse client groups served by that institution

3. identify provincial wide factors that will help to accelerate the successful implementation and integration of PLA throughout the BC education and training community.

Included in the workshop was a discussion of the confusion in faculty's minds between PLA and portfolio assisted assessment. The workshop facilitator also addressed the following "myths" which have surfaced within the system (a) PLA is a magic bullet which by itself can increase productivity and increase student enrolment by large numbers, (b) PLA automatically means development of a portfolio, (c) PLA works best as a stand-alone service only intended for nontraditional learners, (d) PLA can only be used to "give students credit," and (e) PLA must be more rigorous than traditional classroom assessment to ensure the academic rigor of a particular discipline, department or institution.

BC Contract Training Network Meeting, October 12, 1995. Susan Simosko. Susan Simosko spoke about some of the misconceptions about PLA including (a) it would help recruit new learners, (b) it was too expensive, (c) it just was about portfolio assisted assessment, and (d) it was just a fad. PLA, she said, was about identifying, equating, assessing, and crediting/recognizing. The key features of PLA were (a) the assessment shouldn't be linked to any particular education or training program, (b) the diversity of evidence allowed, (c) the learner is in control, and (d) PLA is both a concept and a tool. Different approaches to PLA can co-exist, including admission, placement, exemption, credit, and performance appraisal. She noted that PLA was important for employers because "1/2 of all training is wasted. We just don't know which half." The challenges to PLA in BC were, according to Simosko to (a)integrate it, (b) develop flexible learning options, (c) develop learning outcomes or occupational standards of competence, (d) get employers involved, (e) develop articulation agreements with others, and (f) generate a few success and publicize the benefits.

Letter, October 11, 1995 from OLA to the BC College of Teachers. This letter protests the fact that the BC College of Teachers apparently denied an individual professional certification because she had received credit towards her degree through PLA. The letter requested that the College reconsider its position especially in light of provincial developments.

UCFV's Proposal for PLA Funding from MSTL, July 28, 1995. Summarizes the work done so far (including the difficulties encountered by portfolio assisted assessment) and requests funding for the coming year including funding for workplace based PLA.

Confidential Draft Memo from MSTL on PLA Assessment Funding Model, June 1, 1995 . Discusses implementation grants and suggests that PLA needs to be included in formula funding.

PLA Practitioners and Administrator's meeting, January 27, 1995. Issues identified included (a) publicity - how do candidates find out about PLA? (b) who does the orientation, how is it done? (c) does the portfolio course produce value for money, who teaches it, what are the expectations? (d) challenge exams--who sets the exams, are course final exams being used as challenge exams, who evaluates the challenge exams? (e) how does a course analogue model work--who decides whether the student learning matches, how much has to match? (f) how are PLA credits graded? (g) what kind of follow-up of PLA students is being done? (h) what happens to unsuccessful candidates?
(i) what kind of processes are in position for quality control? (j) what happens to students who need top up training?

Report of a Survey of PLA in Canada conducted by Robert Isabelle and Associates for HRD Canada, April 1994. A survey of all Canadian universities, elicited a response rate of only 41%. The survey indicates that very few universities are involved in PLA. Of the institutions that responded: 25% responded that they conduct program reviews of portions of workplace based training, 41% did assessment through examinations, 21% did some form of portfolio assessment (however there were institutional limits to the number of credits available). The universities reported a low rate of students asking for credit. "This may mean that while assessment options are on the books, they are not widely publicized or they are provided only upon student request." 10% reported that they would accept PLA credits from another institution, 15% had limits for transfer of PLA credits, less than 10% of the respondents indicated that they would recognize credentials from non-academic organizations. The conclusion of the report is "Canadian universities, while still reluctant to accept PLA, show some openness to these ideas.

British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer, An Inventory of PLA activity in BC Postsecondary Institutions. December 1994. 18 colleges and institutes and 2 universities reported. 15 colleges and 2 universities reported that they offer challenge. It is difficult to assess number since many are buried and look like regular courses. However a total of 189 challenge exams were reported by the 2 universities with 174 challenges as successful. The colleges reported 243 requests for challenge, with 203 successful. Number of challenges not distinguishable necessarily in student records. Fees for challenge vary widely as does transcription.

A portfolio course was offered at 7 colleges. Some are credit, others are non-credit. The hours of the portfolio course vary from 14-60 and costs from $108-$186. Eight colleges offer portfolio assessment in one or more areas. Seven institutions use a course analogue model, others use a combination of analogue and elective credit. A total of 27 portfolios were assessed over the pat 12 months, 20 were awarded credit. Practices vary widely on how this credit is identified on the transcript.

Universities "do not accept any PLA credit for transfer because standards are unknown. If PLA credit were validated by subsequent earned course, it is possible that the university might accept it fully."

Appendix G

Additional Survey Data

UCFV Faculty: Functional Area and Departmental Affiliation

n = 211[1]

Area/Department	Response	N	Response %
Arts			
Anthropology	0	2	0.0
Art History	0	1	0.0
Arts Advisor	0	1	0.0
Economics	1	0	100.0
English	3	10	33.3
Geography	3	6	50.0
History	1	8	12.5
Media & Communication Studies	2	3	66.6
Modern Languages	1	3	33.3
Philosophy	2	3	66.6
Political Science	0	2	0.0
Sociology	0	3	0.0
Theatre Arts	2	2	100.0
Writing Centre	1	1	100.0
Total Arts Area	16	46	34.8
Applied			
Applied Communications	2	7	28.6
Business Administration	3	11	27.2
Criminal Justice	6	6	100.0
ECE/Child and Youth Care	6	8	75.0
Fashion Design	2	2	100.0
Fine Arts	0	5	0.0
Graphic Arts	0	4	0.0
Library Technician	2	0	100.0
Office Administration	1	7	14.2
Social Services/Social Work	6	8	75.0
Total Applied Area	28	58	48.3
Science & Technology			
Agriculture	5	5	50.0
Biology	4	6	66.6
Chemistry	4	8	50.0
Computer Information Systems	5	7	71.4
Dental Assisting	1	2	50.0
Kinesiology	2	2	100.0

---

[1] Number is less than total because of difficulty of classifying some non-respondents and some with ambiguous positions.